A COMPANION TO ANCIENT AESTHETICS

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A COMPANION TO

ANCIENT AESTHETICS

EDITED BY PIERRE DESTRÉE AND PENELOPE MURRAY

WILEY Blackwell

CONTENTS

Cover
Title page
Notes on Contributors
Acknowledgments
List of Illustrations
Introduction
- What Is “Ancient Aesthetics”?
- The Organization of This Companion
- REFERENCES
- FURTHER READING

PART I: Art in Context
- CHAPTER 1: Festivals, Symposia, and the Performance of Greek Poetry
  - Festivals
  - Symposia
  - REFERENCES
  - FURTHER READING
- CHAPTER 2: Figures of the Poet in Greek Epic and Lyric
  - Law-giver
  - Symposiast
  - Fabricant and Donor
  - REFERENCES
  - FURTHER READING
- CHAPTER 3: The Contexts and Experience of Poetry and Art in the Hellenistic World
  - Cosmopolitanism and the “Idea” of a Classic
  - *Poikilia*
  - *Leptotēs*
  - The Hellenistic Baroque
  - Realism
  - Reader/Viewer Activity: Integration and Supplementation
  - Reader/Viewer Passivity
  - Spectacle

Psychagōgia
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 4: Poetry, Patronage, and Roman Politics
Public and Private Literary Activity in Regal and Republican Rome
Poetry and Power, from Catullus through Ovid
Places for Poetry in Imperial Rome: Schools, Households, Contests, and the Court
The Persistence of a Classical Aesthetic
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 5: Music and Dance in Greece and Rome
Introduction
The Culture of *Mousikē* in Archaic and Classical Greece
Musical Performances between Greece and Rome
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 6: The Body, Human and Divine in Greek Sculpture
Art and Religion
The Peplos Kore and the Aphrodite of Cnidos
Polyclitus's Doryphoros and the Barberini Faun
Human and Divine
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 7: Painting and Private Art Collections in Rome
Introduction
Triumph and Collections of Greek Art in Rome
Roman Collections and Aesthetics: The Theme of the Picture Gallery
The Evidence from Domestic Wall-Painting in Rome and in the Vesuvian Cities
Conclusion
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING

CHAPTER 8: Architecture and Society
Building, Public and Private
From Architectural to Civic Beauty
The Civic World of Imperial Times: An Obsession with Beauty
The Patrimony of Empire
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
PART II: Reflecting on Art
CHAPTER 9: Literary Criticism and the Poet's Autonomy
Art (*tekhnē*) and Autonomy
The Poet's Autonomy in *Poetics* Ch. 25
Poetic Autonomy and Politics
Poetic Autonomy in Aristophanes' *Frogs*
Conclusions
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 10: Poetic Inspiration
Inspiration and Craft
Inspiration and Authority
Inspiration and Value
Poetry, *Technē*, and *Poiēsis*
Authorship and Authority
Inspiration, Criticism, and Theory
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 11: The Canons of Style
Introduction: Rhetoric, Poetics, Aesthetics
The Archaic Background
Unfortunate Necessities: Aristotle on Rhetoric
Aristotle on Style
After Aristotle: Hellenistic Advances
Types of Style
Conclusion
REFERENCES

FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 12: Sense and Sensation in Music
Responses to Music and *Mousikē*
Elements of Greek Musical Sound
Aesthetics of Ancient Rhythm
Aesthetics of Melody, Voice, and Instruments
Conclusion
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 13: Dance and Aesthetic Perception
Taxonomies and Canons
Outlining an Aesthetics of Dance
The Limitations of Mimesis and the Aesthetic Imaginary
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 14: Greek Painting and the Challenge of *Mimēsis*
Introduction: The School of Sicyon, *Chrēstographia*, and "undecaying beauty"
Physical Resemblance and the Limits of the Visible and the Invisible
The Aesthetics of the "Four-Color Palette"
The Painter's Material Touch and the Evidence from Surviving Documents of Greek Painting
Conclusion: Artistic *Mimēsis* and Ways of Seeing
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 15: Ways of Looking at Greek Vases
Vases versus Painting
Handling the Vase
Connective Dynamics
From Visual Connections to Iconographic Programs
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 16: Displaying Sculpture in Rome
Roman Sculpture and Aesthetics

The Aesthetics of Sculptural Display
Water and Sculpture: Multiplicity and Variability in the Setting of the Sculptures in Roman Imperial Residences
Conclusions
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 17: Perceiving Colors
Are There Different Ways of Perceiving Colors?
The Bright World of the Philosophers
Nature Does It Better
Lightening and Shadowing
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 18: The Beauties of Architecture
"Beautiful" Buildings
Viewing Buildings
Architecture and the Senses
Buildings and Love
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 19: Stylistic Landscapes
Viewing and Reinventing the *Locus Amoenus*
Pilgrimage I: Remote and Floral Pleasures
Pilgrimage II: In Plato's Garden
Conclusion: Dreams of Order
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 20: Conceptualizing the (Visual) "Arts"
But Is It "Art"?
Pliny and the Forgings of "Art History"
The Rhetoric of Criticism
Conclusion: Discourse and Cultural Capital
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
PART III: Aesthetic Issues

CHAPTER 21: Mimesis
Basic Account of Mimesis
Mimesis in Plato
Aristotle
Mimesis and the Fine Arts
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 22: Fiction
Defining Fiction
Classical Perspectives: Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle
Postclassical Developments
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 23: Imagination
Phantasia as Visualization
Phantasia as a Means of Going Beyond Everyday Experience
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 24: Beauty
Introduction
Beauty in Greek: The Problem
Beauty in Greek: A Solution
Beauty and Desire
Beauty and Art
Transcendent Beauty
Can a Picture of Something Ugly Be Beautiful?
Is There Beauty Without Desire?
Beauty and Goodness
The Varieties of Aesthetic Response
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 25: Unity, Wholeness, and Proportion

Plato: Appropriately Constructed Wholes
Aristotle: Bound and Bounded Unities
“Everyone, so to speak”: Proportion
Plotinus: Form
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 26: The Sublime
Testing the Limits of an Idea
The Manifold Traditions of the Sublime before Longinus
The Sublime as an Aesthetic Value
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 27: *Poikilia*
Defining *Poikilia*. From Colors to Versatility: An Evolution toward Abstraction?
The Arts of *Poikilia*: Virtuosity, Perfection, and Harmony
What *Poikilia* Does: Pleasure, Enchantment, and Attraction
How *Poikilia* Works: Capturing the Eye and *Synaesthesia*
An Evolution in the Taste for *Poikilia*
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 28: Wonder
Thaumazein: A Modality of Looking
The Specificity of Aesthetic *Thauma*
Between Acceptance and Suspicion: Two Conceptions of Aesthetic *Thauma*
Between Cognitive Power and Emotional Vertigo
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 29: Tragic Emotions
Emotions in Ancient Aesthetics
Emotions in Greek tragedy
Early Reflections on the Nature of Emotions
Plato on the Distorting Effects of Poetry and Music
Aristotle on the Arousal of Pity and Fear in Tragedy

Aristotelian *Katharsis* of Emotions
Tragedies and Emotions in the Roman World
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 30: Laughter
Greek Symposiarchs on Laughter
Aristophanes and the Taxonomy of Laughter
Horace and Roman Satirical Laughter
Plato and Aristotle on Comedy and Laughter
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 31: Pleasure
Aesthetic Attitude
Plato on Pure and Impure Pleasures
Aristotle on Emotional and Intellectual Pleasures of Art
Gorgias on Imagining Possible Worlds
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 32: Art and Morality
Plato: Reforming Poetry
Aristotle: Defending Poetry
The Stoics: A Moral Point of View
The Epicureans: Seeking Pleasure
Conclusion
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING
CHAPTER 33: Art and Value
Categories and Complications
Assessing Art and Assessing Epochs
Ancient versus Modern
Early Greece
Conclusions
REFERENCES
FURTHER READING

Index of Subjects

Index of Ancient Texts Discussed

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List of Illustrations

Chapter 03

Figure 3.1 Ludovisi Gaul: Suicidal Gaul. Museo Nazionale Romano (Terme), Rome. Sansaini, DAI negative number 56.349.

Figure 3.2 The Drunken Old Woman in Munich.

Figure 3.3 Terme Boxer. Museo Nazionale Romano (Terme), Rome. Koppermann, DAI negative number 66.1689.

Figure 3.4 Crouching Aphrodite. Museo Nazionale Romano (Terme), Rome. Koppermann, DAI negative number 66.1682.

Figure 3.5 Chrysippus: Reconstruction of the statue of Chrysippus, a combination of the portrait head in Naples, MAN 6127 from the Farnese collection and a headless statue in Paris, Louvre MA 80.

Chapter 06

Figure 6.1 The Peplos Kore (Acropolis Museum, Athens 679). Hellner, Neg. D-DAI-ATH-Akropolis 2378.

Figure 6.2 The Aphrodite of Cnidos (Roman copy after a Greek original, *c*.350 BC: Vatican Museum, Rome). Museo Pio-Clementino.

Figure 6.3 Polyclitus, Doryphoros (Roman copy after a Greek original *c*.440s BC: Archaeological Museum, Naples). Koppermann, Neg. D-DAI-ROM-66.1831.

Figure 6.4 Barberini faun (circa third century BC: Glyptothek, Munich). Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München.

Chapter 07

Figure 7.1 Boscoreale, Villa of P. Fannius Synistor, *Oecus* H, west wall, Naples, National Archaeological Museum, inv. s.n.5. With permission of the Ministero dei beni e delle attivita culturali e del turismo – Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli.

Figure 7.2 Rome, Farnesina Villa, detail from corridor F, view

of a harbor, National Museum of the Terme, inv. 1233. With permission of the Ministero dei beni e delle attivita culturali e del turismo – Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

Figure 7.3 Rome, Farnesina Villa, bedroom B, back wall, National Museum of the Terme inv.1118. With permission of the Ministero dei beni e delle attivita culturali e del turismo – Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

Figure 7.4 Boscotrecase Villa, Room 19, west wall, central panel: Polyphemus and Galatea. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.192.17).

Chapter 12

Figure 12.1 The Song of Seikilos with modern musical notation.

Chapter 14

Figure 14.1 Aegae, "Tomb of Queen Eurydice," second half of fourth century BC. Painted marble throne. Hades and Persephone on a quadriga, detail.

Figure 14.2 Aghios Athanasios, Thessaloniki, end of fourth century BC. Painted facade. Large-scale male figure, detail.

Figure 14.3 Aghios Athanasios, Thessaloniki, end of fourth century BC. Painted facade. Large-scale male figure, detail of the face.

Figure 14.4 Aegae, Tomb of Philip II, 336 BC. Facade, painted frieze, detail of a hunter's body.

Figure 14.5 Aegae, Tomb of Philip II, 336 BC. Facade, painted frieze, detail of a hunter's body.

Chapter 16

Figure 16.1 Hadrian's villa (Tivoli). Reconstructed plan of the Building with Three Exedras. Redrawn by author from Kähler (1950, tab.9).

Figure 16.2 Hadrian's villa (Tivoli), Building with Three Exedras. Above: viewing of the sculptures in the niches of the eastern exedra: from (a, c) the wrong and (b, d) the correct position; (c) viewing of the sculpture from the main hall; (d) reconstructed view of a sculpture arranged in the northern niche of the eastern exedra, together with the fountain at the center of the exedra. Drawings and photos by the author.

Figure 16.3 Hadrian's villa (Tivoli), Building with Three

Exedras. Reconstructed sketch of a niche flanked by two octagonal fountains in the main hall of the building. Drawing by the author.

Chapter 18

Figure 18.1 Funerary inscription for P. Cornelius Tacitus, circa AD 120–130. Museo Epigrafico, Museo Nazionale Romano delle Terme di Diocleziano, Rome. *CIL* VI.1574 + 41106 = *AE* 1995, 92 = AE 2000, 160: *Ta]cito(?) Ca[---/ --- X]viro stlitib[us iudicandis ---/ --- quaesto]ri Aug(usti) tribun[o plebis ---.*

Figure 18.2 Pergamon, Mysia (northwestern Asia Minor). View today of the acropolis from below.

Figure 18.3 The Gate of Hadrian, Antalya (ancient Attaleia), Pamphylia (southwestern Turkey). View of the exterior, eastern facade.

Figure 18.4 The Imperial Fora, circa AD 75. Reconstruction after Elisabetta Bianchi and Roberto Meneghini (2007).

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List of Illustrations

3.1	Ludovisi Gaul: Suicidal Gaul
3.2	The Drunken Old Woman in Munich
3.3	Terme Boxer
3.4	Crouching Aphrodite
3.5	Reconstruction of the statue of Chrysippus
6.1	The Peplos Kore
6.2	The Aphrodite of Cnidos
6.3	Polyclitus, Doryphoros
6.4	Barberini faun
7.1	Boscoreale, Villa of P. Fannius Synistor
7.2	Rome, Farnesina Villa, detail from corridor F, view of a harbor
7.3	Rome, Farnesina Villa, bedroom B
7.4	Boscotrecase Villa, Room 19, west wall, central panel: Polyphemus and Galatea
12.1	The Song of Seikilos with modern musical notation
14.1	Aegae, “Tomb of Queen Eurydice”
14.2	Aghios Athanasios, Thessaloniki, painted facade
14.3	Aghios Athanasios, Thessaloniki, painted facade.
14.4	Aegae, Tomb of Philip II, facade, painted frieze, detail of a hunter’s body
14.5	Aegae, Tomb of Philip II, facade, painted frieze, detail of a hunter’s body
16.1	Hadrian’s villa (Tivoli). Reconstructed plan of the Building with Three Exedras
16.2	Hadrian’s villa (Tivoli), Building with Three Exedras: viewing of the sculptures in the niches from different positions
16.3	Hadrian’s villa (Tivoli), Building with Three Exedras: reconstructed sketch of

	a niche flanked by two octagonal fountains
18.1	Funerary inscription for P. Cornelius Tacitus, circa AD 120–130
18.2	Pergamon, Mysia (northwestern Asia Minor)
18.3	The Gate of Hadrian, Antalya (ancient Attaleia), Pamphylia (southwestern Turkey)
18.4	The Imperial Fora, circa AD 75

Introduction

Pierre Destrée and Penelope Murray

What Is "Ancient Aesthetics"?

The subject of this Companion is aesthetics, broadly conceived as responses to, and reflections on, the arts. Responses to the arts are as old as art itself, and the history of Western thinking about such matters goes back to the Greeks, whose speculations on the nature of artistic experience have profoundly shaped our culture. Whether the ancients had a conception of "the arts" or "art" which is in any way comparable to our own is a question of debate. But poetry, song, music and dance, painting, sculpture, and the visual arts were evaluated, judged, and discussed in Greece and Rome long before Alexander Baumgarten published his *Aesthetica* in 1750 and aesthetics emerged as a distinct philosophical discipline. The purpose of this volume is thus to explore the multifarious ways in which the arts were experienced and conceptualized in the ancient world.

There is, inevitably, a degree of anachronism in speaking of "art," "the arts," and "aesthetics" in relation to the ancient world: as is well known, Greek *technē* and Latin *ars* had a much wider semantic range than our modern words, covering arts, crafts, and skills of many different kinds, and the term "aesthetics" was not invented until the eighteenth century. But such problems of terminology are not exclusive to aesthetics. Few would argue, for example, that there is no such thing as Greek religion simply because the Greeks had no word for it. Latin did, of course, have a word, "religio," from which the modern term derives, but the connotations of "religio" and "religion" are by no means identical. This lack of precise correspondence in vocabulary does not prevent scholars from studying a subject called Ancient Religion, from investigating the religious practices and beliefs of the ancient world, comparing and contrasting them with those of other cultures, and thinking about the very category of religion itself. Why should it not be the same with aesthetics? The root problem, that of the applicability of modern concepts to the ancient world, has to be negotiated in any number of cultural domains, such as religion or sexuality, literature, politics, or economics, to name but a few. Indeed one of the constant challenges in studying the civilizations of Greece and Rome is to make sense of a past which is in some ways alien and remote, and yet the source from which Western culture derives. There is always the risk of distorting the evidence to make it fit with our modern preconceptions, of normalizing ideas which appear to be familiar as antecedents of our own, but which may in fact be significantly different from their modern instantiations (democracy is a case in point). But the difficulties involved in the process should not deter us from exploring the very rich field

of ancient aesthetic experience.

One immediate difficulty arises from the versatility of the concept of aesthetics itself, which not only designates a philosophical discipline, defined in various ways, but is also used in a more general sense with reference to beauty, quality, taste, and the distinguishing characteristics of a culture as a whole, particularly as manifested in its art (Eagleton 1990, 3; Porter 2010a, 26). In its first incarnation, aesthetics, whose name derives from the Greek *aisthanomai* (I "sense" or "perceive"), was not restricted to the analysis of art, but applied to the field of human sense perception as a whole, its object being the study of sensory cognition, as opposed to the knowledge acquired by the mind. "Aesthetics … is the science of sensible cognition" (*Aesthetica … est scientia cognitionis sensitivae*), as Baumgarten says in the opening line of the Prolegomena to his *Aesthetica*, an unfinished work, published in two volumes (1750–1758), which is generally regarded as the starting point for the modern conceptualization of aesthetics. Beauty, both in nature and in art, and our responses to it, questions about the judgment of taste and the principles on which it might be based were at the center of this new branch of learning which developed through the eighteenth century, and was formalized as a philosophical discipline by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790). Aesthetics as an autonomous field of inquiry is thus a product of the Enlightenment, and the question then arises as to how it can be applied to the ancient world. Indeed how can there be such a thing as Ancient Aesthetics?

Answers to this question depend to a large extent on what is meant by "aesthetics." According to one definition, the subject matter of aesthetics is the philosophy of art, and for such a discipline to exist there must be a prior conception of Art, that is, a unified conception of the arts, which separates them off from other areas of human activity and assigns to them common characteristics and a specific value. In a highly influential essay, "The Modern System of the Arts," first published in 1951–1952, Paul Oskar Kristeller examined the evolution of this idea in relation to the eighteenth-century grouping together of the five major arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry which made up the so-called system of the Fine Arts, a system which, he argued, was taken for granted by many writers of the period, and which underlines all modern aesthetics (Kristeller 1980, 165). The ancients, by contrast, had no conception of the Fine Arts and no conception of beauty in the modern sense, so there could be no systematic understanding of aesthetics in antiquity:

> We have to admit the conclusion … that ancient writers and thinkers, though confronted with excellent works of art and quite susceptible to their charm, were neither able nor eager to detach the aesthetic quality of these works of art from their intellectual, moral, religious and practical function or content, or to use such an aesthetic quality as a standard for grouping the fine arts together or for making them the subject of a comprehensive

philosophical interpretation.

(Kristeller 1980, 174)

Aesthetic quality, according to this view, is something that can be analyzed in its own right without reference to any other aspects of artistic production. And aesthetics is in essence a philosophy of art based on the notion of the Fine Arts which emerged in the eighteenth century. Crucial to this notion of aesthetics is the autonomy of the discipline and the autonomy of works of art themselves, which are deemed to share common characteristics and a specific value.

Kristeller himself was careful to point out that the various arts have always existed in human society and that what changes is the conceptualization of artistic activity and its place in the general system of culture (1980, 226). But what about Art? If the ancients had no unified concept of the arts, how can we talk about "Art" in antiquity? One possible response is to say that whilst there is no exact correspondence between ancient and modern categories, there are nevertheless similarities in approaches to the arts, not least because the emerging discipline of aesthetics, which owes more to antiquity than its name, has its roots in ideas first formulated in the classical past (Schaper 1968). One key concept is that of *mimēsis* which gave antiquity a more unified conception of the arts than has often been supposed (Halliwell 2002). Indeed, the ancient designation of poetry, music, dance, and the visual arts as mimetic or representational arts which share certain characteristics provided the starting point for the eighteenth-century development of the notion of the Fine Arts in the treatise of Abbé Batteux, *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1746); *mimēsis* is, in fact, that very "même principe" (and it is worth noting that Batteux also published a French translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*). Another crucial concept is the *Sublime*. Whether such a concept was present in Greek aesthetic thought from the beginning, as James Porter (2010a) argues, or a later invention, elaborated in Roman times, the Burkean, and later, Kantian notions of the Sublime, which went on to permeate Romantic views of poetry and art more generally, must obviously be seen as a reworking of this ancient idea (Costelloe 2012). Similarly, the idea of *Genius*, first formulated in the eighteenth century, owes much to Classical antiquity and the rich tradition of reflecting on poetry that begins with Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar (Murray 1989). Here, as in many other areas, the formative influence of classical thinkers on later theorizing about the arts is abundantly clear, and it suggests that we should at least hesitate before accepting the much repeated claim that the ancients had no conception of "art" in the modern sense.

One allegedly crucial point of difference between modern Art and ancient conceptions of the arts that Kristeller emphasizes is autonomy: the ancients were, he asserts in the passage cited, incapable of disentangling (what we call) art from its religious or ethical framework. Admittedly, statues of gods were

supposed to impersonate the god, or goddess; the very word *agalma*, used regularly of statues, points to the fact that the statue was due to "please" the impersonated god (*agalma* being linked to *agallomai*, "I am pleased"). Tragedies and comedies too, as well as recitals of poetry, were performed within the framework of religious festivals, the god Dionysus giving his name to the most famous of these occasions of theatrical performance, the Great Dionysia in Athens. In the case of architecture, most impressive buildings were thought of as houses for the statue of a god (Phidias' Chryselephantine Athena in the Parthenon, for example). Similarly with ethics: Plato's (in)famous critique against poetry would not make sense without the supposition that poetry, like the other arts, is embedded in society and has an ethical function, seen both in its content and in its effects on an audience. But to conclude from facts such as these that the ancients were not eager, in Kristeller's words, "to detach the aesthetic quality of these works of art from their intellectual, moral, religious and practical function or content" is open to dispute.

If Plato was keen to insist on the ethical resonance of poetry, Aristotle firmly asserts that "correctness is not the same thing in ethics and poetry" (*Poetics* 17, 1460b13–14). And the same contrast applies to music too: where Plato insists on the educational role of music in the formation of ethical behavior, Aristotle, although he acknowledges its educational role for the youth too, nevertheless insists that music for leisure is more suitable for the adult "free" citizens of his ideal city precisely because this music is also "free," that is, without any useful role (see *Politics* VIII 3), a view which will be later endorsed in a different way by Philodemus). As to enjoying what we call "formal qualities," or "aesthetic properties," of art works, even Plato, for all his insistence on the ethical framework of poetry and music, recognizes again and again the immense pleasure that is involved in listening to poetry and music, and emphasizes their formal qualities, perhaps even their "beauty." Similarly with sculpture: in fact, ancient authors (see Hesychius A 263) underlined the ambiguity of the word *agalma* which could include the pleasure that viewers can enjoy when looking at a beautiful, well-shaped statue of, say, Aphrodite or Poseidon; if Phidias' masterworks were supposed to incarnate Athena or Zeus, they were also praised for their incomparable beauty – in one of his discourses, referring to Phidias' Zeus in Olympia, Epictetus goes so far as to say that "you take a journey to Olympia to see the work of Phidias, and all of you think it a misfortune to die without having seen such things" (1.6.23).

It is often said that the creation of public museums from the late seventeenth century on, culminating in the foundation of the British Museum (1759) and the Louvre (1793), is part and parcel of the efflorescence of the conception of the "fine arts." But private collections were widespread and fashionable in the Roman world. There is, to be sure, a difference between the taste for

collecting in the ancient world and the creation of the institutions of modern art in which the notion of aesthetic autonomy plays a central part (Tanner 2010, 281–282). But we can see from the way sculpture, painting, and music were enjoyed, even before the "invention" of collections, and later on, "museums," that the Greeks were able, even – *pace* Kristeller – "eager," to respond to the aesthetic qualities of such objects, whatever the contexts in which they were embedded. A religious or social function does not preclude an aesthetic dimension.

Furthermore, this was by no means only the case with music and the visual arts. Whatever the links between tragedy and religion, and particularly with the god Dionysus (still a matter of vivid dispute among historians), many plays of Sophocles and Euripides were re-performed from the time of Aristotle (and those of Aristophanes from a little later on) in a context that can hardly be described as religious in any strong sense of the word. It is also to be noted that Aristotle himself in his *Poetics* pays no attention to the role of the gods in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* or Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, plays that he presents as canonical tragedies. And it is Aristotle again, long before Vitruvius, who repeatedly recommends that in the best city public buildings and even the city walls should be built for the sake of ornament (*pros kosmon*), and not only with a view to their usage (*Politics* VII 11).

On the other hand, it can also be said that the idea of complete autonomy that Kristeller seems to take as a central feature of the modern concept of Art is something of a chimaera (Porter 2009b, 176–178; 2010b, 168–172). Even Abbé Batteux, whom Kristeller takes as the patron saint of the "Modern system of the Arts," very much insists on their ethical importance, which is something we will find in most important subsequent philosophers too, such as Hutcheson, Hume, Shaftesbury, or Schiller (see Destrée and Talon-Hugon 2012). The famous motto "l'art pour l'art" or "art for art's sake" is to be interpreted as a sort of culmination of a tendency we find in Kant, and his concept of "free beauty," but taken to an extreme, and the claim that art can be cleanly separated off from other areas of life is by no means a standard view. In practice, of course, attitudes and responses to art, and the very status of art works themselves, are inevitably conditioned by the wider concerns of society, which reflect the ethical and political concerns of particular eras, as prominent aestheticians in recent years have argued (see, for example, Nussbaum 1990; Levinson 1998; Gaut 2007).

Trying to map modern categories onto the past is bound to be problematic, but a particular obstacle in the case of "art" and "aesthetics" is to determine which modern conceptions are being applied. "Aesthetics" was a contested term from the start and was always open to redefinition. Hegel, for example, began his *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (delivered in the 1820s) by discussing its range of meaning and acknowledging that it was not a wholly appropriate name for his subject, which should more properly be called the "Philosophy

of Fine Art." But he retains it on the grounds that "it is nothing but a name, and so is indifferent to us, and moreover, has up to a certain point passed into common language" (Hegel 1993, 3). Despite Hegel's enormous influence on the subsequent history of aesthetics (Peponi 2012, 2), he himself reminds us that his is one of several possible interpretations of the concept. With "Art," the possibilities are even greater. Kristeller, writing more than 50 years ago, could speak confidently of an agreed notion of Art, based on the "irreducible nucleus" of the five major arts of the "moderns system" (1980, 165). But today there is no such consensus. [1] The question "What is Art?" is one to which there can now be no definitive answer. What *can* be agreed, however, is that artistic activity – singing, dancing, storytelling, painting, making objects of beauty, and so on – is characteristic of human beings, whatever we like to call it. All such activity is embedded in particular societies whose practices and ideas will vary so that no single conception of "Art," even if one existed, could be universally applicable. "Art" is in fact multifarious, its definition changing and unstable (see, for example, Janaway 1995, 187–190; Gaskell 2007; Danto 2013), and we do not need a Platonic Form of Art, so to speak, in order to investigate the role of the various arts in antiquity and the ways in which they were experienced and conceptualized. For art is not just modern, as Porter has put it: "It was ancient, Byzantine, medieval, and belonged to the Renaissance (to speak of the West alone) long before the most recent modernity came about. And with each of these ages of art came a set of aesthetic sensibilities and theories" (Porter 2009b, 174).

It is these aesthetic sensibilities and theories in the ancient world that this Companion is designed to investigate.

Ancient aesthetics, insofar as it has been studied at all has, until comparatively recently, been treated largely from the point of view of the philosophy of art (Squire 2010, 139–142; Peponi 2012, 1–13), but we take a broader view: this is not a book whose primary purpose is to analyze the classical antecedents of eighteenth-century aesthetics, important as they were. Our concern, rather, is with ancient aesthetics as a subject in its own right. This volume, the first of its kind, presents a synoptic view of the arts, which crosses traditional boundaries and explores the aesthetic experience of the ancients across a range of media – oral/aural, visual, and literary. It is not comprehensive, nor could it be, given the vastness of the subject matter, the wide variety of sources, and the changing nature of aesthetic reflection from the oral culture of early Greece to the world of late antiquity. There is, of course, no single view of art that persists throughout that time span, but a whole panoply of different, and often conflicting, responses and conceptions (Porter 2010b, 171). What we offer is an integrated perspective on the major themes of ancient aesthetics which challenges traditional demarcations and raises questions about the similarities and differences between ancient and modern ways of thinking about the place of art in society. One of our primary

purposes is to consider what the various arts have in common; hence we have adopted a thematic approach rather than basing the discussion on individual authors or chronological periods. We have not been prescriptive about how the term "aesthetic" should be understood in relation to the theories, practices, and experiences of ancient art, both sensory and cerebral, and a range of different view points is thus reflected in the contributions to this volume. Indeed, one of the recurring motifs is precisely that of the versatility of the notion of the aesthetic, which applies to the ancient world just as much as to the modern. But a key feature that emerges is that of the interconnectedness of ancient aesthetic responses, suggesting a greater flexibility than we might expect in conceptualizing the boundaries of the various arts, both in relation to each other, and to other aspects of experience. Ancient art may not be assigned to a separate sphere and cut off from other social activities, but it is no less art for that.

The Organization of This Companion

We have arranged our material under three headings to provide some structure to our very wide-ranging collection of essays. The following brief overview is intended to give the reader some idea of the thinking behind our choice of subject matter and to bring out the connections between the various chapters.

Part One, *Art in Context*, gives some historical orientation and discusses the context in which the various arts were performed and produced.

The question "Is this a work of art?" is not one which could have been formulated before the eighteenth century. But the question "Is this a good performance?" is another matter. As Richard Martin argues (Chapter 1), judgments about the value and quality of poetry, song, music, and dance, arts which we separate out, but which for the Greeks comprised a single, united sphere – *mousikē* – are at the heart of the musical contests *(mousikoi agōnes*) which were a feature of Greek life from the religious festivals of earliest times until at least the third century AD. Even if the criteria of judgment are internalized rather than systematically articulated, a study of the available evidence can reveal something of the processes of evaluation at work both in the large-scale performances at festivals and in the smaller environment of the symposium, the all-male drinking group, for which much Greek poetry was composed. In both cases pleasure is an essential part of the experience, but value judgments and aesthetic choices are inseparable from the social norms.

The influence of social and performative contexts on aesthetic choices is further explored by Deborah Steiner (Chapter 2) in relation to the various roles adopted by singers in Greek epic and lyric poetry – law-giver and statesman, symposiast, fabricator, and donor of a precious object – which reveal how the function of poetry in the Archaic and early Classical community is deeply implicated in the overlapping domains of the political,

the social, and the religious. Song is anchored in its civic context, but also has an aesthetic dimension, particularly evident in the notion of song as an *agalma*, a votive offering dedicated to the gods and one designed to give pleasure.

Pleasure remained a central feature in the experience of both poetry and the visual arts in the very different world of the Hellenistic cities, when the focus moves from the local to the cosmopolitan, from the public to the private. The qualities that characterize Hellenistic art forms – learning, refinement, realism, novelty, variety – are analyzed by Graham Zanker (Chapter 3), who details the way in which changed performance contexts produced a new aesthetic which permeated all media. At the root of this aesthetic, he contends, is the notion of *psychagōgia*, the "leading of the soul," whereby the recipients of both poetry and art are brought into close sensual and emotional association with them, the ultimate effect being pleasure.

Moving from Greek culture to Rome, Thomas Habinek (Chapter 4) surveys the Roman system of patronage as it evolved over time, and its impact on the production of literature as reflected in style, genre, and theme. Despite complex questions concerning the relative autonomy of poets and their freedom to say what they wished, most poets seem to have chosen to participate in a system of exchange which worked to mutual advantage. From the early Republic to late antiquity, the role of poetry in public life is evident, though the relationship between aesthetic choices and the social and political contexts in which poets and writers worked is far from straightforward. But the continuity of the Roman state throughout this long period of history fostered a sense of continuity within the literary tradition, which resulted in the classicizing aesthetic so characteristic of Latin literature in its various manifestations. In this important respect, Latin literature can be said to be the outcome of Roman politics.

The broadly chronological framework of the first four chapters is complemented by four chapters focusing on specific art forms in their historical context. The boundaries of art forms are fluid, as is particularly evident in the case of *mousikē*, the art of the Muses, which embraced the entire field of poetic performance and has no modern equivalent. Music in this sense, as well as in the narrower sense more familiar to us, is the subject of Eleanora Rocconi's contribution (Chapter 5), which traces the evolution of the art from the communal song culture of early Greece and the great festivals of the Classical period to the virtuoso displays of professional performers and their gradual transformation into spectacular forms of entertainment in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

Again, pleasure and the "psychagogic" power attributed to music is seen as key to understanding its various functions, whether religious, educational, or recreational. The relationship between aesthetics and religion is evident from the pleasure which the gods take in human artistry: the more beautiful the

offering, the greater the pleasure, suggesting an in-built aesthetic dimension to the practices of divine worship in the Greek world. This theme is further developed by Rosemary Barrow (Chapter 6) with reference to Greek sculpture. Greek statues are often accompanied by inscriptions describing them as *agalmata*, objects of delight, and the anthropomorphic basis of Greek religion puts the focus on the beauty of the idealized human body. Whether such statues are felt to highlight or to diminish the gap between human and divine, the essential nexus of art and religion continues to be an important source of meaning for Greek sculpture through changing aesthetic styles from Archaic stylization, through Classical naturalism to Hellenistic exaggeration.

In the Hellenistic age, alongside public commissions that retain a religious and civic function, there is an expansion in styles of representation to suit more personal tastes and powerful new rulers begin collecting works of art to adorn their private palaces. In Rome, collections of art works were, for the elite, a source of prestige in the exercise of power, and of pleasure in private life. But is it possible to be more specific about aesthetic responses to such art? Agnès Rouveret (Chapter 7) examines the theme of the picture collection in art and text, focusing on the role of landscape and the depiction of mythological scenes, which are shown to create an aesthetics of intimacy within the domestic sphere. Central to her argument are the parallels to be found between styles of wall painting and rhetorical codes, exemplified in her analysis of material from the Boscoreale villa, a domus on the Esquiline Hill, and the Farnesina villa. Sensitivity to the built environment more generally is also evident in antiquity, as Catherine Saliou shows (Chapter 8) in her investigation into the shared notions of architectural beauty that are involved in the social and political mechanisms of building from the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD. Public building is of civic concern throughout this period, and the notion of civic beauty includes ethical as well as physical beauty. Private buildings too contribute to the adornment a city, and in the Roman period the beauty of cities testifies to the prosperity, happiness, and durability of the Empire.

Part Two, *Reflecting on Art*, explores some key themes in ancient reflections on the various arts in a wide variety of sources.

The issue of autonomy has been crucial to debates about the nature of aesthetics since the eighteenth century, as discussed above. Andrew Ford (Chapter 9) finds some evidence for such a notion in antiquity and argues that poets could enjoy a rather robust degree of autonomy in the sense of immunity to critiques of their works from moral, social, or political perspectives, which indicates that, in practice if not always in theory, the ancients recognized an aesthetic dimension to literature to a far greater extent than is sometimes allowed. Poetry held a privileged position amongst the art forms of antiquity from the beginning, as is evident in the concept of poetic inspiration. Ancient literary criticism treats poetry as a *technē* and analyzes it

from that point of view, but, as Penelope Murray shows (Chapter 10), the idea of inspiration is indissolubly linked with poetry through the figure of the Muse. Invoked by poets from Homer onwards, the Muse is both a guarantor of poetic authority and an emblem of everything that is outside the poet's control in the production of a poem. The key text examined in this chapter is Plato's *Ion* in which issues of authorship, authority, and the link between inspiration and the arousal of emotions were first, and most influentially, explored. A concern with emotional responses is also evident in ancient discussions of rhetorical style, which incorporate an aesthetic dimension, notwithstanding their practical function. As Jeffrey Walker argues (Chapter 11), ancient theories of style embody a rhetorical aesthetic – or an aesthetic of persuasion – and can be seen as rearticulations of the oral-archaic identification of persuasive speech with rhythmic utterance that, like music, exerts a psychagogic ("soul-guiding") force on the listener's mood and affect.

As we have seen (Chapters 1 and 5), music and dance were very often part and parcel of poetic performances: lyric poetry, as the term itself shows, was sung to the accompaniment of the lyre, and the choral parts in dramatic poetry were sung and danced. And yet it would be a mistake to restrict music and dance to purely ancillary roles: there were occasions when they were performed on their own – that is, without words – but, whether they were part of a poetic, or theatrical performance or not, many texts reflect ways in which the ancients adopted an aesthetic approach to music and dance. In contrast with the widespread tendency to analyze Greek *mousikē* in terms of its ethical effects, Armand D'Angour (Chapter 12) focuses rather on ways in which ancient listeners responded aesthetically (with their senses) to music through an analysis of the elements of musical sound. While for moderns melody tends to play the most central role, rhythms, with their exuberant complexity and structural diversity that were often compared to poetic meters, were perhaps the most salient feature in the ancient appreciation of music. Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi (Chapter 13) adopts a similar approach to dance, discussing the notion and practice of spectatorship where the impact of the beauty of the movements of dance, and the interrelation between cognitive and sensual enjoyment, play a central role. Here again, the aesthetics of dance that we can reconstruct is much more diversified than may appear at first sight: if Aristotle famously classified dance as one class of *mimēsis*, later authors such as Libanius and Lucian emphasized rather the physical signifier, that is, the intense motion of the limbs, and therefore the sensory aspects of dance.

Poetry was a prime source of reflection on the arts in antiquity, and in the Greek world in particular held pride of place, not least because of the centrality of Homeric poetry in education, and the civic importance of festivals. But the visual arts also played a crucial role in public life and were of no less significance from the point of view of ancient aesthetics. "Painting

is silent poetry, and poetry painting that speaks", the famous quotation attributed to Simonides by Plutarch (*Moralia* 346f), makes explicit the parallels between the visual and the verbal which are already present in Homer (*Iliad* 18.483–608) at the start of a long tradition of literary descriptions of works of art which imply a comparison between the two. Responses to the various arts more generally were often couched in similar terms, suggesting points of contact between them despite the differing media in which they were executed and the varying contexts in which they were received.

The next three chapters focus on attitudes to painting, pottery, and sculpture, by way of example. Hariclia Brecoulaki (Chapter 14) considers the objectives of pictorial *mimēsis* in ancient Greek painting with reference to textual sources, together with the evidence from the best-preserved corpus of paintings from ancient Macedonia, dealing with one crucial difficulty both artists and philosophers had to face when dealing with *mimēsis*: if verisimilitude was considered to be the central aim of painting, especially in the case of portraits, perhaps its most valuable achievement was the ability to represent what was not directly visible like the emotions, or the character of a person, as well as a purely physical likeness. Panels and frescoes were mostly on display in public areas, but a more private way of enjoying visual arts, typical of the Greek world, was painted vases. Exploring the visual poetics of the vases used at symposia, François Lissarrague (Chapter 15) argues that the aesthetic potentialities of Greek painted vases can only be properly understood with reference to their usage, and he analyzes the various ways in which images on vases can be related to each other, depending on their shape, and how such images can be perceived by the user/viewer.

In Rome, sculpture functions as an important marker of culture, status, and identity, but was also appreciated on aesthetic grounds. As Thea Ravasi (Chapter 16) shows in her analysis of the aesthetics of display in Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, ideas about beauty and appropriateness influenced the subject, style, and dimensions of statues, but also their setting in public and private spaces. These ideas embraced the appreciation for the multiple and mirroring effects of water in association with sculpture: water not only provided a doubled reality but also created a fragmentation of images that constantly varied with the changing of light. The aesthetics that directed the design of some of the most inventive buildings of the villa thus referred to balance rather than symmetry, to dynamism rather than stasis.

Discussions of painting and sculpture in terms of *mimēsis* emphasize the importance of shape and form, but color too was widely discussed in antiquity. Michela Sassi (Chapter 17) examines the assumptions that underlie both ancient theories on color and vision and the various aesthetic judgments to be found throughout ancient literature on the beauty and emotional power of (mainly brilliant) colors; particularly noteworthy is the observation that

colors in antiquity affected people in degrees of light and darkness rather than in terms of hue.

Architecture is another of the visual arts, where shapes and forms, together with colors and materials, have significant aesthetic effects. Edmund Thomas (Chapter 18), developing themes already touched upon by Saliou (Chapter 8), explores the aesthetic criteria attested by Vitruvius (stability, utility, and attractiveness), but also highlights new techniques, such as the use of polychromatic marbles, and their influence on perceptions of buildings. A contrast is observed between the notion of beauty (*pulchritudo*), involving grandeur and spaciousness, and the more refined aesthetic of *venustas* (charm), associated with small-scale works. Gardens were an important feature in Roman architecture, and the appreciation of landscape more generally in antiquity has implications for our subject, as discussed by Nancy Worman (Chapter 19). Long before the development of aesthetic conventions in landscape art and architecture, landscape appears in literature as a valued and evaluative medium, from the *locus amoenus* of Calypso's cave (*Odyssey* 5.59–74), to the banks of the Ilissus in Plato's *Phaedrus* (remodeled by both Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus), to the pastoral setting of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*. But, as Worman argues, such scenes, very often staged in terms of the spectator's pleasure, are not neutral spaces, since they are always shaped by aesthetic negotiations that open out onto ethical and political valuations.

Michael Squire (Chapter 20) concludes this section by tackling the fundamental question, already raised in our Introduction, of how we can analyze the aesthetic experience of the ancients without importing anachronistic notions about the nature of "art" into the frame, a problem which is exacerbated in the case of "art history" by the simultaneous similarity and difference between ancient and modern systems of conceptualizing the arts. Pliny the Elder's famous chapters on painting in the *Natural History* constitute the main paradigm for modern theories of art and the writing of art history, but his own interest in images is embedded in a much broader project in which nature and mankind's interaction with the natural world is the general concern. By contrast, in the Greek and Roman rhetorical tradition, painting and sculpture are often discussed in terms of personal "styles" that are comparable to individual modes of verbal expression, as exemplified by Quintilian. These two very different approaches should remind us of the multiplicity of reflections on art (and not only the visual arts) to be found in the ancient texts, which, no less than their modern counterparts, present no singular or coherent idea of the nature of "art."

Part Three, *Aesthetic Issues*, presents some of the central themes in ancient aesthetics which themselves invite comparison between ancient and modern conceptualizations of art as a cultural practice.

Our first thee chapters cover what might be described as the background to

ancient aesthetics without which something like an aesthetic approach would not have been possible: *mimēsis*, fiction, and imagination. As already stated, *mimēsis* is probably the deepest, and most widespread assumption held by the Greeks as to what constitutes the medium of the visual, musical, and dramatic arts. But contrary to what the Latin translation, *imitatio*, might suggest, *mimēsis* is a complicated concept (and, some think, untranslatable) as it varies from simple "imitation" to fictional representation, and dramatic enactment. Paul Woodruff (Chapter 21) examines the whole family of concepts embraced by *mimēsis* which, in one form or another, are regarded as fundamental to aesthetics, both ancient and modern. Focusing primarily on Plato and Aristotle, he explains that whereas Plato was struggling with the problem of the relationship between *mimēsis* and truth, Aristotle shifted to the notion of likelihood: mimetic poetry is essentially poetry that offers a likely story which in turn is what allows the poet to arouse the emotions of his audience. This poses the question of fiction. But, as Stephen Halliwell emphasizes (Chapter 22), fiction was not a settled and clearly defined concept in antiquity any more than it is for us moderns: it occupies an in-between terrain, so to speak, between truth and falsehood, between myth and history. Likelihood and fiction in turn presuppose, in one form or another, imagination. Anne Sheppard (Chapter 23) discusses two contrasting conceptions of imagination (*phantasia*) in antiquity: the most common is that of visualization, often connected with *enargeia*, "vividness." It is from this "imaginative projection," as we may call it today, that another, more creative, concept of imagination emerged in certain texts, the most famous being a passage in Philostratus (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 6.19) where he contrasts *mimēsis* and *phantasia*, asserting that in fact what inspired Phidias and Praxiteles to produce their statues of the gods was not *mimēsis*, but their imagination of something they could not have seen.

Our next four chapters deal with the aesthetic properties of works of art (or perhaps, objects, more generally speaking, which can be viewed and appreciated from an aesthetic point of view). Modern aesthetics has taken for granted, at least from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, that the essential property of a work of art is beauty. But did the ancients have such a concept? David Konstan (Chapter 24) demonstrates that our answer should be careful and nuanced: to be sure, Greeks and Romans from Homer on up to, say, Plotinus or Augustine assume that our aesthetic experiences must include some sort of recognition and enjoyment of what we commonly call "beauty"; but instead of using one central word for it as we (perhaps confusingly?) do in modern languages, Greeks and Romans had many different words denoting "beauty" in quite varied, and specific ways. Perhaps the closest that the ancients came to conceptualizing the idea of "beauty" was through the connected notions of unity, wholeness, completeness, magnitude, and proportion, here reviewed by Malcolm Heath (Chapter 25) in relation to Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. If the notions of proportion and magnitude point to a

rather calm, somehow cognitive experience (or, at least, to the cognitive aspect of an emotional experience), the Sublime points to a rather different response, that of rapture and ecstasy. James Porter (Chapter 26) argues that this category, far from being a literary critical concept that emerges only with Caecilius and Longinus, pervades Greek literature from the beginning, its properties such as "grandeur," "elevation," "dignity," and "majesty" associated with an intensified experience of beauty in response to a whole range of phenomena.

Another quality involved in ancient conceptions of beauty is expressed by the very common Greek term *poikilia*, "variegation" (adj. *poikilos*). As Adeline Grand-Clément demonstrates (Chapter 27), this is a protean notion, used to describe the visual effect produced by the assemblage of different colors and materials on an object, but also to express the ideas of variety and complexity; variegated art works have a seductive power that appeals to the eyes but also to other senses, thus establishing that *poikilia* is a key notion for understanding a distinguishing feature of ancient aesthetic responses: the fondness for polysensory experience, which generates pleasure.

The aesthetic properties that have been analyzed so far are linked to certain ways of experiencing art. Our next three chapters further explore how such experiences were described, and up to a certain point conceptualized. Perhaps one of the earliest, and in fact most widespread, ways to describe an aesthetic experience is through the word *thauma*, a rather multilayered word, that includes various connotations such as "wonder," "admiration," "astonishment," or else "amazement" in front of something "marvelous," or "exceptional." As Christine Hunzinger (Chapter 28) discusses, the term refers primarily to a visual experience, and it was used from Homer on in what was later called *ekphrasis*, that is, the visual description of a particularly remarkable object. But it also refers, more generally, to the experience of multiplicity and variegatedness (*poikilia*), and the wonder at art's ability to make things live. Emotional responses are further explored by Christof Rapp (Chapter 29) who focuses particularly on tragedy as treated by Plato, Aristotle, and Seneca. While Plato is suspicious of the emotional impact of poetry, Aristotle focuses on the importance of constructing a plot that will arouse the emotions of pity and fear, which, in turn, are supposed to produce tragic pleasure, which may be (tentatively) linked to the famously disputed *katharsis* theme. As to Seneca, if *apatheia*, the absence of any emotion, is the moral ideal he shares with the Stoics, what the spectator experiences in the theater is only a first impulse, or prelude to a fully fledged emotion, rather than the thing itself, which may leave room for an idea of a particular type of pleasure – aesthetic pleasure – that would not be morally harmful.

In contrast with tragic emotions, laughter was of course also an important way of responding to certain types of artistic production such as comedy and satirical poetry of various sorts, as well as to caricature in visual art. After

reviewing laughter at symposia, and in the works of Aristophanes and Horace, Ralph Rosen (Chapter 30) turns to Plato and Aristotle, emphasizing that they were profoundly aware of its complexity and understood that the artistic mechanisms for drawing laughter from an audience were nearly always fraught with the potential for misunderstanding, and, in some cases, even danger.

Our final group of chapters addresses some of the enduring questions about the function and significance of art. As we have seen throughout this volume, pleasure was at the core of aesthetic experience in antiquity, but what sort of pleasure are we dealing with? Pierre Destrée (Chapter 31) considers the responses offered by Gorgias, Plato, and Aristotle: if Plato condemns the strong emotional pleasures we get from tragedy, his own myths are meant to provide his readers with an emotional, and a cognitive, pleasure; according to Aristotle, tragedy as well as music are to provide spectators with the pleasure of the "activity" of the emotions involved, as well as some cognitive pleasures linked to our proper appreciation of the arts in question, while Gorgias, in his *Helen*, defends the idea that aesthetic pleasure should be linked to an imaginative journey in possible worlds.

Poetry, like the other arts, was a source of pleasure, but should it be morally useful as well as pleasing? This question dominated the debate concerning art and morality in antiquity, with poetry at the center of the controversy. Elisabeth Asmis (Chapter 32) discusses the ramifications of this question and the great variety of answers that were proposed, focusing on the contributions of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans. In particular, she suggests that Plato developed a new conception of poetic discourse, as exemplified by his own dialogues, as a way of engaging individuals in a search for morality, while the Stoics recast the problem by demanding a moral point of view on the part of both author and recipient, laying the foundation of a theory of reception.

As we have seen through the essays presented here, the arts in one form or another were not only a central feature of public life in the ancient world, but also the subject of reflection in a wide variety of contexts. But how far were they valued? Michael Silk (Chapter 33) considers this issue with special reference to literature (the most theorized of the arts) and on a comparative basis in relation to other periods of Western civilization. Notwithstanding the complexities involved in making such a comparison (the status of "literature" and "art" as permanent categories, the value implied by institutional status, the assessments of epochs of art, and so on), Silk argues that there is no precedent in antiquity, or in any other period before the modern era, for the claims that have been made for art as a distinctively transformative aspect of human experience in the last two and a half centuries. Poetry and the other arts were clearly highly esteemed in practice in early Greece, but with little theoretical explication. Thereafter, in the Greco-Roman age and the centuries

following, from Aristotle to Samuel Johnson, estimations of literature are relatively modest in comparison with the unique value that has been attached to literature (and to art more generally) in the period from the later eighteenth century to the present day. Silk's comparative analysis returns us to the eighteenth century, a crucial period for the history of aesthetics, as we have seen, and one which continues to dominate modern thinking about the arts. But the very rich experience of the arts in antiquity, examined in this volume, should remind us of alternative possibilities: art changes from age to age, and every epoch has its own aesthetic.

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FURTHER READING

On the general subject of ancient aesthetics, Kristeller (1980) is an important starting point, to be read in conjunction with Porter (2009a). Halliwell (2002, 2011), Porter (2010), and Peponi (2012) are, in various ways, sustained and cogent defenses of the view that aesthetics is not merely an Enlightenment phenomenon, while Martindale (2005) is a powerful plea for a return to the aesthetic after decades of historicist approaches to literature. Tanner (2006) and the collection of essays edited by Platt and Squire (2010) explore the implications of the idea of “art history” in relation to antiquity, while Konstan (2015) and the essays edited by Asmis (2010) examine the notion of beauty. The volume edited by Sluiter and Rosen (2012) offers a variety of essays on topics in ancient aesthetics. Bychkov and Sheppard (2010) is an anthology, in English translation, of philosophical texts by Greek and Roman authors from the late fifth century BC to the sixth century AD, which comment on some of the major aesthetic issues. Pollitt (1974) remains a useful anthology of (bilingual) texts arranged thematically to provide a glossary of the key terms in ancient art criticism.

Suggestions for further reading on the individual topics discussed in this Companion can be found at the end of each chapter.

NOTE

1 Whether there ever was is a moot point: Janaway (1995 , 187–189); Porter (2009a, 2009b); Shiner (2009); Elsner (2010, 298–300).

PART I
Art in Context

CHAPTER 1
Festivals, Symposia, and the Performance of Greek Poetry

Richard P. Martin

Festivals

The performance of choral dance, music, and song featured prominently in many religious rituals, especially but not exclusively those for Apollo, Artemis, and Dionysos. Animal sacrifice, the core of many festivals, seems to have been accompanied by music on stringed and reed instruments, perhaps originally as a way to drown out inauspicious sounds of slaughter (Nordquist 1992). Although we cannot determine when such accompaniments turned into competitions, Greek tradition retrojects the introduction of poetic and musical contests (both regularly called *mousikoi agōnes*) to the mythic past. The antiquarian Pausanias (10.7.3) reports that at Delphi the oldest contest, for singing a hymn to Apollo while playing a concert lyre (*kithara*), was first won by Chrysothemis of Crete, whose father had performed ritual purification for the god after Apollo slew the Python. By the seventh century BC, the *Pythia* at Delphi had become a major event for contests in music and song (with athletics on the side). We might see the mythical retrojection as akin to the story of the Judgment of Paris with its international consequences in the Trojan War. Such stories dramatized a broader Greek concern with the exercise of serious decision making in key moments: it is not surprising that the word for "act of judgment" (*krisis*) underlies our words "crisis" as well as "criticism" (Nagy 1990: 402–403).

An original *ritual* context must be borne in mind for almost all Greek poetic productions, although it is debatable whether one can find consistent "religious" meanings in epic or drama. But the factor of *competition* made public the process of aesthetic choice, just as (in Athens at least) institutions like the assembly and law courts allowed for increasingly public contestation and articulation of political and social opinions. Unfortunately, records for competition, usually with just the bare information about winners and prizes, are scarcer than political decrees (on Athenian dramatic records, see Millis and Olson 2012). And yet, given the number of competitions and long survival of festivals (until at least the third century AD), trends emerge: the growth in professionalization after the third century BC; mobility of performers; increase in the number of festivals; and variety of events. Seventeen sites in Greece are known to have sponsored musical contests before 400 BC (Herington 1985, 160–166). By the second century AD, the

region of Boeotia alone could boast that many (Manieri 2009). Most opaque is the role of the individual evaluator. Even in the most well documented cases from Athens, we know neither the exact procedures for picking the 10 official judges each year, nor how they formed their aesthetic views. Just as jurors in a modern court of law never officially reveal the reasoning behind their verdicts, no ancient judge of a dramatic competition, a contest in singing to the accompaniment of pipes, or a recitation of Homer needed to record what prompted his favorable vote. (On judging and prizes, see further Henderson 1989, Wright 2009.)

One must distinguish the process of immediate judgment from the later activity of the professional *kritikoi* ("critics") – scholars, especially of the Hellenistic period (third through first centuries BC) whose study of the Archaic and Classical periods (seventh through fourth centuries BC) laid the foundation for all subsequent knowledge of the poems. Yet, their approaches grew out of the practices of earlier connoisseurs, shaped by competitions (Ford 2002, 272–286). The comic poet Aristophanes chooses to stage in his *Frogs* (405 BC) a stylistic and ethical comparison of the deceased tragedians Euripides and Aeschylus as an *agōn* (the winner getting resurrected), replicating the outer world of the Dionysiac festival, in which his own plays competed. A sense of operative fifth-century aesthetic criteria can be garnered from such tragic parodies (Hunter 2009, 10–52) as well as from Aristophanes' attacks on his rivals (Biles 2011).

Judgments encouraged by the agonistic mode fall between the endpoints of athletic performance and physical beauty. The inventors of the horse race and pentathlon clearly recognized zero-sum criteria. Certain runners or horses crossed the line first, jumpers and throwers cast and leapt further, and results were usually clear-cut. Since athletics and poetic events often took place at the same sites (although not at the classical Olympics), criteria might well have converged. At the other end of the spectrum were beauty contests known from various communities, the most famous being the *Kallisteia* on Lesbos (Alcaeus fr. 130b). Also well known was a contest concerning beauty or manly excellence (*euandria*) held as part of the Panathenaea (Crowther 1985; cf. Wilson 2000, 38–39). The modern Miss Universe contest (to take one example) states what judges rate (from poise to appearance in evening gown), but for none of the ancient beauty contests do we have specifics. Judging artistic performances, however, came closer to the beauty contest model; from the scant and anecdotal evidence (Le Ven 2010), it appears sweetness of voice, fine sentiment in words, and the overall production of pleasure – rather than good technique – were central. Thus, competitive criteria coincided with the aesthetic ideal of extreme pleasure foremost in depictions of song within the epics and Homeric Hymns (Peponi 2012).

Glimmers of evidence suggest the purely disinterested evaluation of aesthetic effect was not always uppermost for the ancient judge. A decree from Athens

of the mid-fourth century BC (*IG* II^2 1153) records a proposal by Polynikos approved by the tribe Hippothontis (one of ten such civic subdivisions) honoring Metagenes because he voted for the victory of its tribal chorus at the annual Thargelia festival of Apollo. Metagenes "judged in a fine and just manner and without taking bribes" (*kalōs kai dikaiōs kai adōrodokētōs*). If, as Peter Wilson suggests, the proposer Polynikos was himself the producer (*chorēgos*) for the chorus, and also a member of the tribe Hippothontis, the decision could have been an inside job, with a gold crown waiting for Metagenes a few months later. Note that the evaluative word here (*kalōs*) extends from the dithryamb to the manner in which it was judged (Wilson 2007, 159). In short, while discussing verdicts on poetry, we must also take into account the "aesthetics of judging" – governed by wider conceptions of social comportment.

The Greeks were not alone in sponsoring poetic competitions – Vedic hymns in ancient India and medieval Japanese *waka* poetry were subject to contests between poets. But characteristically, competition in the *mousikoi agōnes* is distinct as a civic activity, not just for an elite, and involving both professionals and amateurs (Osborne 1993). The dramatic and other musical contests in Attica alone may have needed as many as 5000 performers annually (Fisher 2011, 186–188). How did such widespread agonistics affect poetic forms and content? Limitations in the evidence shrink our focus to drama and hexameter poetry, obscuring the undoubted importance of dithyramb (choral song for Dionysos), paean (choral song for Apollo), citharodic nomes (sung monodically to the *kithara*), and songs for the *aulos* (a reed instrument). The *mousikoi agōnes* complicate the periodization of Greek literature. The remains of Archaic hexameter – whether Homeric epic, Cyclic and Hesiodic poems, Orphic verses, or oracles—were almost certainly mediated and transmitted by itinerant professional reciters called "rhapsodes" ("song-stitchers"). Whether or not the distant figures credited with creating Homeric and Hesiodic poetry, perhaps as early as 750 BC, themselves were competitive professionals, the texts of their poems certainly crystallized in this milieu. The *Life of Homer* traditions, dating back to the sixth century BC, depict the poet as a wandering rhapsode, working the coastal cities of Asia Minor (Nagy 2010, 29–58; cf. Graziosi 2002). It is less likely that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in their current 24-book form, were written down in the eighth century BC, when Greek alphabetic writing was in its infancy, and then transmitted verbatim for centuries, than it is that competing reciters recreated a fluid set of compositions in each performance. Hexameter poetry probably achieved its near-final forms around the mid-sixth century BC, on the verge of the Classical period – exactly when Athenian drama was also taking shape in its own competitive context (Nagy 1996). The time-line of Greek literature is thus considerably more compressed than handbooks tell.

An indication that the epics developed within the messy world of competition

is the undoubted extensive "intertextual" relations among Homeric, Hesiodic, and Orphic poems (Martin 2001; Tsagalis 2008). These are most economically explained if rhapsodes carried around in their heads "texts" – oral or written – of a number of poets at once. Plato's *Ion* shows that they could specialize in Homer or Hesiod – but might be expected to perform either (*Ion* 531a–d). Their repertoires extended beyond epic to iambic and elegiac poets like Archilochus and Xenophanes (Athenaeus 14.620b). While the diversity of each poet's memory-hoard no doubt enabled cross-referencing, the overall shaping of the canon must have been tailored to the circuit of competitions, each city-state exerting local preferences, while traveling poets managed a Panhellenic performance anthology.

The Homeric poems do not dwell on competitive artistic performance, even if externally shaped by it. Acknowledgment comes in one vignette about the bard Thamyris, punished by the Muses after boasting he could defeat them (*Il.* 2.594–600). Thamyris was traveling from Eurytus, a city sacked by Heracles in a feat once commemorated by a now-lost epic, the *Taking of Oikhalia*. By saying that while returning *from Oikhalia* he was "stopped from his singing," the *Iliad* suggests that the Heracles tradition suffered a break in historical transmission from its origin (Martin 1989, 229). By contrast, the *Iliad* poet guarantees continuity with the past through the Muses, summoned in the proem to the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.484–486). Although on the surface a story about dueling mythic singers, the Thamyris incident also alludes to the potential *agōn* between Homer and rivals (or between rhapsodes backing different regional heroes).

The useful trope of "contact with the Muses" is most spectacular in the proem to the *Theogony* of Hesiod, when a shepherd of backwoods Boeotia is personally instructed by the divine mistresses of song (*Theogony* 23–34). A slightly agonistic tone gives the passage an edge: the Muses call Hesiod and his fellow shepherds "bellies only" – implying the mortals might do anything for a meal. But they proceed to assert their own right to tells lies (as beggars do) or the truth. That "Hesiod" in this scenario resembles a rhapsode bears noting. The Muses' gift of a branch of Apollo's sacred laurel symbolizes authority to speak, like the *skēptron* wielded by epic heroes in assemblies. In an actual performance of this Hesiodic poem, the reference highlighted the rod (*rhabdos*) carried by rhapsodic performers (another ancient etymology of "rhapsode" being "rod-singer").

Further traces of competition emerge from the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* (also called the *Certamen)*. This melange of prose and poetry dates, in its current form, to Hadrian's time (second century AD), but stemmed from the sixth century BC (Richardson 1981). It provides fascinating views of competition and judging. (Hesiod wins because his poetry praises peace, even though the audience likes Homer.) The rivals engage in virtuoso manipulations – capping each other's verses, using curve-ball enjambment to

change the meaning of dueling quotations, opposing one another's themes – that can be paralleled in Archaic and Classical poetry (Collins 2004). Aristophanes' *Frogs* echoes the older form of the *Certamen* (Rosen 2004), while verse exchanges characteristic of the symposium manifest the same techniques (see below).

Whatever form a sixth-century *Certamen* might have had, two scraps of old evidence depict Homer and/or Hesiod competing. In the *Works and Days* (650–659), Hesiod recalls his only sea voyage, from Aulis on the mainland to Chalcis in Euboea to compete (and win) at funeral games for Amphidamas. He dedicated his bronze tripod to the Muses at Mt. Helicon, near where they taught him to sing. The alleged prize was still displayed in the time of Pausanias (second century AD), its story doubtless reworked in Hellenistic times in the context of a long-running local festival, the Mouseia at Thespiae. The poet of the *Works and Days* does not name his rivals in Euboea, but a fragment attributed to Hesiod (fr. 357 MW) implies that he did compete with Homer at a different event, on Delos: "Then for the first time Homer and I, singers, sang about Phoebus Apollo with the golden dagger, having stitched together a song in new hymns" (*en nearois humnois rhapsantes aoidēn*). The phrasing clearly marks their "rhapsody" as a *collaboration*. This accords with the dynamic interactions in the *Certamen* whereby each singer tags new lines onto the other's. It is hard to imagine an entire epic created in this way; the fragment probably alludes to the so-called "Homeric" hymns.

From that genre, in fact, we do have further testimony to competition. The conclusion of a short hymnic prayer to Aphrodite (*Hom.Hymn* 6) begs the goddess to "grant that I win victory *in this contest*" (*en agōni … tōide*). Longer hymns elaborate richly on the structure of shorter types that functioned as introductions to epic performances, and these genres exerted mutual cross-influence. The long *Hymn to Apollo* was developed by rhapsodes, in the leisurely narrative style of epic. It falls into two distinct but related portions about Apollo at Delos and Delphi, which can represent a poetic collaboration between composers using the styles of Homer and Hesiod (Martin 2000). The Delian portion contains an interesting snapshot. At lines 166–175 the narrator makes a light-hearted contract, promising to spread the fame of some virtuosic girl singer-dancers, in return for their future testimony about his own talent. When someone asks, "who, for you, is the sweetest singer hereabouts, in whom do you most delight?" they are to answer, "A blind man, he lives in rocky Chios; it is his songs that are best, all of them." This scenario captures some key features of Archaic poetics. The resident maidens of Delos can recall the immediate past as well as the distant horizons of myth, thus binding the broader Panhellenic world to their "epichoric" or local traditions about Apollo. Their miraculous mimetic performance, we are told, resonates powerfully with the emotional experience of every spectator (Peponi 2009). Furthermore, they are living witnesses to the superiority of a

certain singer's compositions, judged in the immediate aesthetic terms of *sweetness and delight* (note – *not* accuracy in preserving tradition). Finally, in depicting this interaction the *Hymn to Apollo* (a piece of hexameter rhapsodic poetry) refers to another genre, women's choral song, associating itself with it through the narrative figure of "Homer" (the "man of Chios").

It is worth pointing out that the *Hymn* elides any mention that either the maiden's choral *hymnos* recalling "men and women of the past," or the Chian narrator's (epic?) songs, occur within competitions. Yet other evidence about Delian performances regularly portrays an agonistic environment (Kowalzig 2007, 54–128). Thucydides, the historian, quotes this very part of the *Hymn to Apollo* (at 3.104) to support an argument that musical contests existed well before his own late fifth-century era (Nagy 2010, 13–20). This is a general problem in recapturing how festivals shaped Greek poetry: the texts themselves suppress or scramble evidence for their actual composition and performance conditions, in what has been called "diachronic skewing" (Nagy 1990, 21–24).

From these sporadic mentions of early contests outside Athens, we can turn to the most important *mousikoi agōnes* that shaped extant Greek poetry, the Athenian Panathenaea and Dionysia. The vastness of the field allows concentration on only three topics relevant to the festivals' aesthetic products: selectivity, interactivity, and ethos.

The Panathenaea, in particular, illustrates these. Selectivity, for instance, characterizes everything about the annual July festival (made especially grand every four years), from the choosing of who will parade in the great procession, carrying various objects (as depicted on the famous Parthenon frieze), to the handling of the musical/poetic competitions. A key selection was the choice, apparently in the sixth century, of just five musical *tekhnai* as being eligible for prize competition: the "rhapsodic" performance of poetry without music, alongside four arts related to instruments (singing to the *kithara*; singing to the aulos; playing the *kithara*; playing the aulos). Selectivity applies, too, to the scale of prizes, according to which the highest regard, at least in the early fourth century BC, was for citharody, for which first prize was a crown of gold worth 1000 drachmas plus an additional 500 silver drachmas (Kotsidu 1991). And most importantly, selectivity elevated Homeric poetry. Just as competitions on Delos had been reconstituted by Peisistratus in the sixth century BC, so his family had a hand in the primacy of Homer at Athens. The oldest son of Peisistratus is said to have introduced the public performance of Homeric poetry at the Panathenaea (ps.-Plato, *Hipparchus* 228b). Such tyrannical choosiness for public performance of certain poets can be paralleled about 50 years earlier in the sixth century, when Cleisthenes of Sikyon banned the rhapsodic contests in his polis because they used the Homeric poems, in which Argives (his enemies) were (he thought) always being glorified (Herodotus 5.67.1). Whether Hipparchus

singled out Homer on reverse political grounds, in order to foster an Ionian connection with Athens, the main point is that selectivity *in a festival context* canonized particular texts.

Engendering much recent discussion is the custom (supposedly established by Hipparchus) by which rhapsodes would perform Homer in relays, each taking up where the other left off. Such procedures give another sense to the notion of "stitching" songs seen in the fragment of Hesiod mentioned above: once more, collaborative competition is in play. But this specific protocol illustrates two additional themes, interactivity and ethos. If a consensus text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had already been written down, against which individual rhapsodes could be checked, then competition at the Panathenaea would have devolved into a contest to see who best remembered lines from Homer. If, at the other extreme, there was as yet only a general notion of what episodes went where, in an otherwise unadorned and fluid "oral" text of the poems, then each rhapsode would be judged for composition-in-performance – a much tougher, but more rewarding, activity, for both artist and audience. The scenario in Plato's *Ion* resembles more the former, as the rhapsode Ion is expected to produce on-demand episodes similar to those in our current texts – the slaughter of the suitors, for instance (*Ion* 535b). This still leaves leeway, however, if not for wholesale creation, at least for histrionic "interpretation (as we can speak of "dramatic interpretation" of fixed scripts). Rhapsody thus approaches the art of the competitive dramatic actor (*hupokritēs*). As Ion tells Socrates, his vivid feeling for the episode he is interpreting produces a similar aesthetic effect on the audience: "for from the platform I look down at them at various points crying and staring at me with awe and being amazed as the narrative is told" (*Ion* 535e). At the same time, Ion contends, he is totally attuned to his audience: "For if I make them cry, I'll be the one to laugh, getting the money, but if they laugh, I'll be the one crying, having lost the money." Not only does this sort of interactivity provide a reason for certain episodes to ascend in popular demand, while others (perhaps The Catalogue of Ships) must have sunk. It also assimilates epic recitation to at least one of the other *tekhnai* in the same suite of contests at the Panathenaea, the citharodic. Aristotle in the *Poetics* (1462a4–8), in mentioning how rhapsodic performance can be overdone by such performers as Sosistratus, specifically makes the analogy to over-stylized singing (presumably citharodic) by Mnasitheus of Opuntium. The possibilities for extreme elaboration of citharody are recounted in numerous examples from the ancient world, up to and including the would-be artist Nero (Power 2010, 3–181). In the later fifth and the fourth centuries BC, rhapsodic art, citharody, and the art of acting (*hupokritikē)* practiced in tragedy and comedy seem to have been converging, due precisely to the festival context of the Panathenaea. On a wider scale, the coexistence in Athens of the Panathenaea with the heavily choral and dramatic festival of the Dionysia meant that the white-hot *mousikē* culture of the city-state could meld together the modes of recitation, song, acting, and

dance. Even if these had to be kept separate for purposes of competition – and thus eventually became canonized as the genres we know (Rotstein 2012) – in practice, the coexistence of many genres with the same viewing audiences would have led to a fruitful broadening of the aesthetic and critical horizon for all involved. That individual actors, as well as the dramatic productions as a whole, were rated, starting in the mid-fifth century, only turned up the heat. To a conservative critic like Plato, on the other hand, the genre-bending thereby encouraged seemed decadent, a sign of increasing *theatrokratia* – "rule by the viewers" (*Laws* 700–701).

A similar complementary set of pressures can be detected within the Dionysia itself. A good deal has been written about Euripidean comedy and the paratragedy of Aristophanes – dramatic phenomena that must owe their development to the cheek-by-jowl presentation of both genres (along with satyr plays) at one and the same annual festival (Revermann 2006). This interactive fusion process must have been further accelerated if the choruses of tragedy and comedy consisted, in some occasions, of the same performers, a possibility that Aristotle in the *Politics* (3.1276b) takes for granted. Selectivity was manifest at the Dionysia in other ways. For example, the members of the mandatory 10 dithryambic choruses of men and the 10 of boys all had to be citizens by birth and members of the tribe for which they sang and danced. The chorus *trainer* on the other hand, often was *non*-Athenian. By contrast, in the dramatic contests at the same festival, the *khorodidaskalos* had to be a citizen, while the chorus members could be from various tribes. About the strict qualification of entrants into the competition we know little: the whole process of the "preview" (*proagon)* for drama, and the tribal selection of producers for dithyramb, are fairly opaque (Csapo and Slater 1995, 109–110). There may even have been a sort of off-Broadway exile to the Lenaia festival for certain playwrights who did not make high enough grades to keep competing at the Dionysia, if evidence from an Oxyrynchus papyrus (P.Oxy 2737) is interpreted aright (Rosen 1989). Again, our ideas about aesthetic choices and values would be far better informed had we access to more precise factual information. What we might glean from the foregoing is a sense that the polis in the Classical period sought a balance between epichoric religious correctness – hence the restrictions on participation in the dithyramb for the god Dionysos – and Panhellenic entertainment. The latter led to a growing recognition of professionalization among actors, and a desire to offer only top-grade productions.

The ethos of the *mousikoi agōnes* at Athens was, in a word, fairness. We can interpret the custom of rhapsodic sequencing as specifically designed to prevent one performer from grabbing the juiciest parts – such scenes as the death of Patroklos – in order to wow the audience for a win. Instead, some rhapsodes presumably had to get stuck with the equivalent of less inspiring bits of the *Iliad* (Book 7? The Catalogue of Ships?). The ruling idea is

basically Olympian: a level playing field for all. This might even have extended to running time, when it came to Dionysia dramas, if we trust an offhand remark in Aristotle's *Poetics* concerning plays formerly being regulated by the *klepsydra* or water-clock (1451a8).

The fairness doctrine appears in another stage in the reports about judging of drama at the Dionysia. While we may still wonder over individual decisions – for instance why Sophocles did not win with *Oedipus the King* – the process itself, if followed regularly, short-circuited attempts at bribery (Wilson 2000, 98–102). Lists of names were submitted tribe by tribe and placed in 10 urns, with which it was a capital offense to tamper; eventually, 10 judges, one per tribe, were selected by random draw, sworn to impartiality, and asked to submit their ranked lists of the plays (each of three dramatists having staged three tragedies and a satyr play). Out of these 10 lists only five were then drawn, again at random, and somehow (perhaps simple addition) first, second, and third places were awarded. The dominant ideology must have been that the demos at large was a reliable judge, since, as Pickard-Cambridge observed of the tribal judges, "That there was any demand for critical capacity seems unlikely" (Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 97).

Plato, naturally, was jaded about the capacity of theater judges to resist persuasion, or the hooting, whistling, and wooden-bench-banging-by-the-heels of the mob (called *pternokopein*). He has the Athenian remark in the *Laws* (2.659a) that "the true judge should not take his cue in judging from the audience, affected by the roar of the crowd or his own lack of education. Nor on the other hand, when he knows, should he, out of the same mouth that invoked the gods when he undertook to be a judge, lyingly and carelessly proclaim a decision through unmanliness and cowardice." The Athenian scorns, as especially corrupting, an alleged law of Sicily that entrusted decisions to a show of hands by the spectators (659b). Contrast this with the optimistic Aristotle who in the *Politics* (3.1281b7) entertains, at least in theory, the notion that "the many are better judges of works of music and of the poets, because different men judge different parts [of the performance], and all of them all of it."

How was the *content* of literary works affected by festival judgments? Minimally, it would seem. Most tragic and comic works have on the surface *nothing* to do with Dionysos, and while the aesthetics of "pleasurable beauty" (*kharis*) within the Homeric poems coincides with values cultivated at the Panathenaea (Nagy 2010, 266–277), there is much else about epic that this overlap leaves out. Instead, we might consider a connection that escapes initial notice precisely because it is right before our eyes: the overriding thematics of fairness and justice in all the works deriving from the two key Athenian festivals, whether epic or dramatic. It is perhaps not accidental that the machinery of fair competition so important to the actual running of the *mousikoi agōnes* resembles the workings of divine Justice (*Dikē*) in rhapsodic,

tragic, and even comic productions. The overarching principle that structures the *Oresteia* and *Antigone* lies beneath the ideas of just distribution inherent in the democracy. Of course, one could say that it looms large already in the *Iliad*.

Whether Justice dominated also in the dithyrambic texts emerging from the Athenian Dionysia and Thargelia is impossible to say, given the pitiful fragments that represent nearly 800 years of annual performances at multiple locations, down to AD 200 in Athens. If Bacchylides' Ode 18 was actually composed for a boys' dithyrambic chorus at the Thargelia (as some have suggested), it is interesting that even this occasion-bound festival text focuses on *Dikē*: "A god rouses him, so that he can bring justice down on the unjust," says its chorus, speaking to the old king Aegeus of the imminent arrival of the Athenian hero Theseus (18.41–42). Accidental preservations such as this make one rue the loss of many other non-dramatic choral performances. Even the Anthesteria, better known for mass drinking, is said to have had performances, which featured in the first-century AD the recitation of Orphic poems.

A dearth of texts means we know little about Spartan festival poetry, although this was part of the Archaic complex of Gymnopaidia, Karneia, and cult songs for Artemis (Pettersson 1992). Nor can we catch the voices from festivals like the Argive Aspis or Hecatombeia, or the Karneia at Cyrene, familiar to the poet-scholar Callimachus. Every polis worth its name held contests, and most of the texts from these have vanished. One would love to know what the poetess Aristomache of Erythrae sang to win a contest at Isthmia in the second century BC, or how the hymns for the emperor Hadrian sounded at Ephesos centuries later. What we *can* say is that the gradual integration of Athens into the wider Hellenistic scene, while it saw a shift in the funding and production of original choral work at Athens, also saw an explosion of poetic activity, often reusing classic Athenian genres and texts, around the Mediterranean. Aristotle's pupil Alexander the Great in 332 and 331 took actors and musicians with him, giving shows all the while from Memphis in Egypt to Tyre in Phoenicia (Arrian 2.5.8; 3.1.4; 3.6.1). Later at Ecbatana, it is said that 3000 professional entertainers showed up for *mousikoi agōnes* staged by Alexander (Arrian 7.14.1). The hugely influential role of the professional guildsmen called *Dionysou Tekhnitai* (Artists of Dionysos) facilitated the introduction of Greek culture to far-flung foreign lands, the preservation of older Greek texts, and even the creation of new ones, such as a dithyramb titled *The Horse* by an artist called (appropriately) Kallippos, who was commemorated, on an inscription discovered not long ago by John Ma in a Turkish schoolyard, for winning a competition at Teos near Smyrna, sometime in the third century BC (Ma 2007).

Symposia

Festivals provided intermittent opportunities to see performances on a large scale. While an intrepid ancient traveler might have visited one a week, in sailing season, the ordinary Athenian or Spartan would have to wait a full year for the most important dramatic or musical competitions. (The Athenian was perhaps better served, since "deme" theaters existed at many sites throughout Attica, the region surrounding Athens, although it is unclear what sorts of competitions or productions might occur in Ikarion, Eleusis, Peiraeus, or Myrrhinous.) From the Archaic period onward, the symposium – an all-male, elite drinking party, featuring various entertainments – functioned to socialize young men and equalize all participants (Rossi 1983 ; Murray 1990b). In this regard, the symposium was equivalent to the festival environment, writ small. It had its own political dynamics, centered internally on *isonomia* (equal distribution), while presenting a less democratic face to the outside world. In symposia, poetry and song, jokes, riddles, fables, comparisons, and other "small" genres were the common currency of self-presentation.

Since Richard Reitzenstein's groundbreaking study (1893) the origins of a number of important literary genres have been traced to the symposium. Poetry sung to the lyre by one voice, like that of Alcaeus and Anacreon; elegiac poetry (accompanied by the pipes) ascribed to such figures as Theognis, Callinus, Tyrtaeus, and Mimnermus; and iambic poetry by Archilochus, Hipponax, and others (most likely recited without music) are now understood as having been addressed, notionally at least, to an intimate audience of like-minded symposiasts, some of whom may have been rivals for political or erotic rewards. Love and war, public events and private desires, all found expression in sympotic poetic practices.

While it is useful to contrast the smaller space of the symposium with the larger festival contexts in which choral lyric and drama flourished, the relationship of the two venues is also marked by overlaps and similarities. Elegy, for example (composed of couplets alternating hexameter and pentameter dactylic lines), clearly interacted in terms of diction and theme with epic traditions, such as those in larger public recitations. (The fifth-century BC poet Pigres went so far as to compose an alternative *Iliad* by inserting a pentameter after each verse of the Homeric epic.) Elegy was clearly performed at symposia but also at festivals (Bowie 1986). The former would be appropriate locations for shorter compositions, like those found in the body of poems attributed to Theognis (Figueira and Nagy 1985). As Bowie has shown, the scene-setting characteristic of these and other short elegies – Archilochus speaking as if on military watch (fr. 4), Tyrtaeus as if rousing troops (frr. 10, 11) – can best be interpreted as fictional projections, within verses actually recited at drinking parties. The festival environment, on the other hand, would accommodate poems like Simonides' recently discovered elegy on the Greek victory at Plataea in 479 BC (Boedeker and Sider 2001). Evidence for competition in singing elegies at the Delphic Pythia

and at the Athenian Panathenaea exists (Bowie 1986, 27).

The paean was another genre that enjoyed a double life. Sung in public gatherings by choruses of men or boys, in procession or in dance, this poetic hymn to Apollo was part of many cult celebrations. At major international festivals like those for Apollo on Delos, choruses from many city-states performed, and star poets, like Pindar, wrote for some (Rutherford 2001, 58–68). At Delphi, competitive paean-singing may once have existed. More privately, at the symposium, the paean held a canonical place in the regular routine, marking the start of the drinking party by the choral singing of the participants. In Sparta, according to the historian Philochorus, (Athenaeus 14.630f), the custom during military campaigns was to sing together a paean after dinner, then to individually sing verses from the elegies of the favored poet Tyrtaeus, the best performer being awarded a prize cut of meat by the commander. Another famous Spartan poet, Alcman, speaks of "striking up the paean" for the diners at communal meals (fr. 98 *PMG* = 129 Calame). Xenophon describes a symposium of Greek soldiers and Paphlagonians, at which the paean-singing preceded displays of armed dancing by various contingents and more paean-singing by men from Arcadia (*Ana*. 6.1-5-12). Typically for sympotic poetry, it is difficult to disentangle any one genre from a web of related performance practices, or to pinpoint the meaning of a single poetic act: the paean, which in its minimal form could be a thanksgiving prayer or an apotropaic plea, could usefully establish a range of sympotic moods.

Another form of essentially sympotic poetry illustrates the same sort of flexibility, while presenting a miniature version of some agonistic behaviors we have already noted in festival contexts. *Skolia* – literally "crooked" or "zig-zag" –compositions are songs generally of two to six lines. A corpus of 25 anonymous songs is preserved in Athenaeus from the late second century AD, but the poems themselves most likely date to the sixth and fifth centuries BC (Fabbro 1995). Some praise the Athenian heroes Harmodius and Aristogeiton (*PMG* 893–896); others warn darkly of false friendship, "scorpions under the rock," and the need to be "straight" – as the crab said to the snake (*PMG* 889, 903, 892). Dicaearchus, the pupil of Aristotle, who wrote a treatise *On Musical Contests*, associated the word "crooked" with the practical details of performing this type of song at parties, citing the random, non-linear order of those who sang, passing around a myrtle twig as they did so (Suda, s.v. *skolion*). Alongside the set of anonymous short verses, a number of other poems, of which we have scant knowledge through quotations or references, are also named *skolia* by various ancient sources. They are attributed to at least a dozen different poets, including Pindar, Corinna, Terpander, Sappho, Alcaeus, and even Aristotle (Fabbro 1995, xi–xii; cf. Jones 2007, 313–352). What apparently unites the two subcategories is a strong tendency to provide commentary on the sympotic scene through

indirection – more plausible semantics for the meaning of the term *skolion*. This can be observed in the earliest representation in Greek literature of an exchange of *skolia*, in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (422 BC). As part of a plan to reform his hyper-democratic father, Bdelucleon rehearses the old man for an elegant symposium at which various elite figures will be present (Vetta 1983b). When the symposiasts begin talking, the father is supposed to "take up the *skolia* in a fine way (*Wasps* 1222: *ta skoli' hopōs dexei kalōs*). There follows an imagined sequence of hilariously mismanaged song-exchanges, with Philocleon the father first insulting other guests, like Cleon himself, through improperly aggressive directness in his verses. The old man gradually shows he is learning the art of being *skolios* (indirect). If Cleon chooses to threaten him, says Philocleon, he'll respond in song, "With your madness for absolute power, you will end up toppling the city." A scholiast on the passage notes that Philocleon has slightly altered some old verses of Alcaeus, the monodic poet of Lesbos, to fit the situation. In this turn and his next two, he thus deflects opprobrium by using a dead poet's opinions. The *Wasps* passage shows, as well, how segments identified as the work of well-known poets like Alcaeus could end up being labeled "skolia" in later literary histories. In the free-floating atmosphere of the symposium, *any* composition – even snatches of choral poetry intended for large public audiences – could be re-purposed and sung within a net of allusive, socially positioned reference.

Aristophanes provides other glimpses of this sympotic recycling process. In the *Clouds*, Strepsiades complains that his wayward son refused at the symposium to sing lyrics of the sixth-century master Stesichorus, or to recite something from Aeschylus, preferring to declaim a speech about incest from the radical tragedian Euripides (*Clouds* 1353–1372). Alcman, Simonides, and even the relatively more recent Pindar (first half of fifth century BC) are elsewhere dismissed as too old-fashioned for late fifth-century symposiastic use (Reitzenstein 1893, 31–38). Clearly a generational shift subverted the familiar canon.

The relationship of sympotic poetry – especially elegiac – to the institution of the drinking party varies from vivid description of an individual's desire for music, friendship, wine, and sex (the lattermost especially in Theognis 1231–1389) to more didactic analysis of the proper behavior in the midst of such pleasures (Hobden 2013, 22–65). While Anacreon can call in verse for a bowl "to drink without a pause for breath" (*PMG* 356), or professes mad love for Cleoboulus (*PMG* 359), Xenophanes of Colophon (sixth century BC) recommends order and cleanliness, reverent speech, avoidance of violence (or even narratives of violent Giants), and drinking just the quantity that one can toddle home without an attendant (1 W). Moderate drinking was also poetically applauded, as a healthy Spartan habit (like avoiding toasts) in the later fifth century by the conservative politician Critias (6 W). It is hardly surprising that sympotic poetry, sung within intense male groups, was

obsessed with politics and ethics, but also musical practices, eugenics, and antiquarian lore. What is distinctive about the surviving verses is how these concerns are knit together and allegorized, the symposium constituting a microcosm of the city-state (Levine 1985). Solon, the early sixth-century Athenian lawmaker, explicitly connects the hubristic behavior of the city's leaders with their inability to "hold down excess or handle with good order [*kosmein*] the festivities of the banquet" (4.5–10 W). The private is political, just as symposia echo festivals. The richly diverse corpus of elegiac verses attributed to Theognis (sixth century BC) is the best introduction to this mindset, in which lessons from the symposium (to discriminate friend from foe, true from false, base from elite) hold the only hope for his troubled city Megara. Next to its ethical precepts, this sympotic corpus also provides us with the most powerful expression of an essential aesthetic attitude relevant to ancient Greek society. Verses from Theognis (15–17) explicitly mythologize and articulate the "aesthetic" as a coefficient of the social:

Muses and Graces [*Kharites*], daughters of Zeus,

You who came to the wedding of Cadmus, sang this verse:

"Whatever is beautiful [*kalon*] is near and dear [*philon*];

what is not *kalon* is not *philon*."

We can find no neater expression of the absolute necessity, in Greek thought, for making the qualities inherent in worthwhile human interaction into the ultimate criteria for beauty.

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FURTHER READING

Essential are source books by Pickard-Cambridge (1968) and Csapo and Slater (1995). Herington (1985) pioneered study of ancient Greek "song culture"; his useful appendices are keyed to poetic genres. Wilson (2000) examines the details of Athenian production. Wilson (2007) features studies

of festivals outside Athens. Kowalzig (2007) demonstrates the bonds between choral poetry and local cult celebrations. Manieri (2009) is an epigraphic survey of Boeotian contests.

Inscriptional evidence for the Athenian dramatic victors is re-examined by Millis and Olson (2012), while Kotsidu (1991) gathers (but does not translate) the relevant sources for the Panathenaea. Two fine collections by Neils (1992, 1996) uncover the larger meanings of that landmark festival. The politics and sociology of Athenian festivals are analyzed in Osborne (1993), Goldhill and Osborne (1999), and Fisher (2011). Connor (1987) is a pathbreaking analysis using anthropological approaches. The long-term implications of the Panathenaic contests for Homeric epic have been brilliantly developed over two decades by Nagy (1990, 2002, 2009, 2010). Larmour (1999) looks at parallels between athletic events and dramatic contests, with a focus on tragedy. Paeans and citharody are given magisterial treatment by Rutherford (2001) and Power (2010), respectively. Biles (2011) explores the impact of contest environments on comic poetics. Griffith (1990) sketches a full range of agonistic effects in a number of genres. Representations of contests, including vase paintings, are examined in Shapiro (1992) and Martin (2003, 2010).

Studies of the symposium and its poetry have exploded since the 1980s. Essential is Murray (1990b); Rösler (1980), Rossi (1983), and Gentili (1988) are still fundamental. Hobden's recent work (2013) offers a greatly expanded overview and bibliography. Filtering of poetic corpora through symposia is examined in Budelmann (2012), Carey (2011), Figueira and Nagy (1985), Nagy (2004), and Irwin (2005). A vast literature took the symposium as its fictional setting: J. Martin (1931) is still a good introduction to the whole range, while Bowie (1993) concentrates on the early period.

Finally, two overarching studies connect rhapsodic, choral, and sympotic performances to much larger cultural concerns: Stehle (1997) to gender and Peponi (2012) to philosophical aesthetics.

CHAPTER 2
Figures of the Poet in Greek Epic and Lyric

Deborah Steiner

Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief: this concatenation of identities first attested in a late seventeenth-century version of the English counting game includes just some among the multiple hats worn by the Greek poets in the extant epic and lyric repertoires. Read by ancient commentators and biographers, and by many modern scholars of the last centuries too, as direct reflections of the composers' actual circumstances and life histories, we now take a more nuanced view and treat the self-styled seducers, exiles, down-and-outers, and distempered aristocrats who assume the speaker's voice in Archaic and early Classical works as mere masks or, following this chapter's title, "figures" designed to serve several ends: they can at once promote the poet/performer's authority and the efficacy of his (or her) words, answer to an audience's generic expectations and the specific occasions and sites at which all Archaic poetry was performed, and reflect the particular political-cum-civic ideology modeled in a song. This fresh orientation has much to recommend it, not least the abandonment of an all too often vain search for a "real world" individual whose biography and background are there to reconstruct. Putting aside the visionary shepherd and splenetic farmer burdened by an improvident father and litigious brother animating older accounts of Hesiod, more recent readers treat the *aoidos* of the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* as a "poetic ego," a character both individualized and tradition-honed who stands distinct from any long-lost composer, and whose name, "emitter of voice," suggests a generic rather than historical identity that could be assumed by whoever chose to deliver these (and later) works retrospectively assigned to "Hesiod."

A second critical shift informs my discussion here. While an essay on this topic written some 30 or 40 years ago would have emphasized the division between the two genres of the chapter's title, epic and lyric (here understood, for all the misnomer involved, as including elegy, *iambos* and lyric proper, i.e. monodic and choral compositions in lyric meters), the combination of an ever expanding body of fragments recovered from the Egyptian sands and fresh literary approaches has prompted a revisionist focus on continuity, not change. In place of the older teleological model which drew a direct line from Homeric song through the Greek "lyric age" and all the way forward to the Romantic poets of nineteenth-century Britain, and pegged the poet's notorious "discovery of the individual self" or emergent subjectivity to the turning point

between epic and lyric verse, many now assume that the several genres and categories of poetry were co-extensive, each responding to the other and reworking the same material in the spirit of agonistic one-upmanship and exchange. Scrutiny of lyric meters likewise suggests that some of these, derived from a common Indo-European poetic heritage that can be traced back to the third millennium BC, may predate the dactylic hexameter and cross-cultural evidence gathered by anthropologists and folklorists demonstrates that song cultures in non-literate societies all but inevitably encompass heterogeneous modes of compositions; what determines the mode of discourse is the character of the occasion and audience expectations, and not the limited nature of the available generic repertoire.

This double orientation in part determines the three "figures" that, among any number of identities, my discussion explores: first, the poet's self-presentation as law-giver and, more broadly, actor in the political, civic sphere; second, his assumption of the role of symposiast, participant in that more or less exclusive "drinking club" already visible in texts and artifacts from the final quarter of the eighth century on (Murray 1994); and third, the poet, most typically the composer of choral lyric, who styles himself and his choristers creators and donors of a precious good or *agalma*, a votive object crafted for the god. In each instance, I consider both epic and lyric poets who claim the profile, suggest points of continuity and exchanges between their self-representations, signal generic pointers that alert an audience to the fictitious quality of the speaker's voice, and explore the complex relations between the circumstances framing an individual performance, the position the singer would occupy at that occasion, and the figure that he has taken on. More broadly, the identities singled out for treatment demonstrate the poet's presence – sometimes real, sometimes a projection of the self – within the chief and overlapping domains of the Archaic and early Classical community: the political, the social, and the religious.

Law-giver

I begin with what belongs among the earliest mentions of a "singer-man" in the extant sources, at *Odyssey* 3.267–268. In Nestor's reminiscences of events prior to the Trojan War, when Agamemnon left for Troy he appointed an individual to watch over Clytemnestra: "and moreover by her there was a man who was a singer [*aoidos*], to whom the son of Atreus had given many instructions as he went to Troy, to restrain [*eirusthai*] his wife." But the would-be seducer Aegisthus prevails and the guardian finds himself dispatched to a desert island where, having become the "prey and spoil of birds" (271), he is heard of no more. Post-Classical authors had much to say about this bard; one source identifies him as Demodocus, whom Clytemnestra so respected that she ordered him banished, not killed;[1] in this, Demetrius of Phalerum's historicizing account, the *aoidos* originally came from Laconia

(ever the bastion of upright, tradition-bound *mousikē*) and was brought to Mycenae after impressing Agamemnon by his winning turn in an early citharodic *agōn* at Delphi. While several more recent commentators find this singer – attested in no other literary or visual source – something of a sore thumb, others grant him more paradigmatic status: according to Stephen Scully, his role is that of "transmitter, teacher, and constructor of … values" (Scully 1981, 78), performer of the type of moral precepts that will safeguard the *oikos* and polis for which, for much of the *Odyssey*, the household acts as metonym. The lines preceding the introduction of the anonymous singer support this account: here Aegisthus appears as rival performer, one whose verbal seductions prevail as he, in language used elsewhere in the poem of the impact of sometimes mendacious and almost always potentially dangerous song on its audience, "enchants" (*thelgesken*, 264) the queen.

If we can see in this ill-fated individual (and it is no happenstance that Aegisthus, who maltreats the poor bard so, comes to a sorry end, whereas Odysseus, who spares the turncoat Phemius, lives on to enjoy celebration in song; poets regularly include in their works admonitions against those who slight their claims) an early manifestation of the poet acting as corrector and maintainer of social mores, then this figure is entirely at home in preliterate societies. Richard Martin's rich discussion of the traditions surrounding the Seven Sages cites several examples of how narratives carrying moral-cum-legalistic messages are promulgated through performances of song, not infrequently within an agonistic context, where singers compete in stylized manner against one another and present rival ethical agendas to their audiences, figured both singly and collectively within the verses (Martin 1993).

It is as just such a "performer of wisdom," in Martin's phrase, and agent in the public and expressly legislative domain that Hesiod presents himself. Not only, in the well-known side-by-side passages of *Theogony* 80–103, does the poet draw dictional and thematic links between the *basileis* who enunciate "straight judgments" and keep their people from harm with "deeds that turn around" (*metatropa erga*, 89) and poets whose similarly Muse-patronized and mellifluous verbal interventions are gifts that "turn aside" (*paretrape*, 103); in more wholesale fashion, the *Erga* sets up an equivalence between Zeus as poet/law-giver and the Hesiodic persona who acts as "junior partner" (so Clay 1993) to the god. The pairing is evident in the programmatic opening of the composition. Insofar as Zeus is the one "through whom men are unfamed and famed alike, and named and unnamed" (3–4), his role dovetails with that of the poet who deals out *kleos* (just the task that Hesiod has assigned his tutelary Muses in the work's opening lines) and ignominy, promoting one man's name and obscuring another's; immediately following this we meet the god acting in his judicial capacity as he "straightens the crooked" (7). But in the curious turnabout that the closing of the proem describes, it is Hesiod, or

more properly the poetic ego, who has assumed the poetic and legislative lead: enjoining Zeus to "straighten verdicts with justice" (9), he directs him to so do only after listening to – this no less than twice (9) – the poem's narrator in his self-appointed role as the one who will "speak authoritative and true words" to Perses (10). The adjective assigned to these *muthoi* carries particular weight: in the familiar declaration of the Muses of *Theogony* 27, *etētuma* describe what, in the goddesses' songs, is unequivocally real or true.

Both Hesiod and his poetic persona are, of course, major presences in the works of the individual (subsequently cast as one of the Seven Sages) known to historians principally as the legislator and reformer who served as chief archon of Athens in 597 BC and whose works reshape the traditional role of the versifying precept- and judgment-promulgator to suit a contemporary political landscape. As Solon's fr. 36 W, with its retrospective account of the reforms the statesman brought about, illustrates, his activity in the civic and legislative spheres proves inseparable from his poetic identity, and both poet and law-giver become intercalated roles between which the work's performer oscillates:

> Before achieving what of the things for which I brought the *dēmos* together did I cease? In the verdict of time I might take as witness to these things the great mother of the Olympian gods, black earth, enslaved before, now free, from whom I once took up the boundary stones fixed in many places. And I brought many back to Athens, to their god-founded homeland, who had been sold, some illegally, others in accordance with the law, and those who had fled under need's constraint, no longer speaking the Attic tongue, as is the manner of those who wander all about. And those right here enduring shameful slavery, trembling at the whims of their masters, I set free. These things I achieved by my power fitting together force and justice and I carried them all the way through, as promised. Laws for the base and elite alike, fitting upright justice to each, I wrote down. But if another had taken the goad as I did, an evil-minded and acquisitive man, he would not have restrained the *dēmos*. For if I had been willing to do what pleased the opposing side and in turn whatever the other side planned for them, the city would have been bereft of many men. On account of these things, making defense from every side, I turned/was turned about like a wolf among many dogs.

Bypassing all the historical problems and enigmas that these lines include, I focus on the palimpsest of (co-extensive) identities rehearsed here. The poem's first portion presents Solon in the political domain, bringing back the deracinated Athenians and taking up the *horoi* "fast fixed everywhere" (*pollachēi pepēgotas*) that have both literally and within the poem's linguistic, acoustic, and syntactic design displaced the citizens forced to "wander everywhere" (*pollachēi planōmenos*). Following the twofold liberation of the people and the Attic land, the poet reflects on the modus operandi by which he

effected this "reassembling." In an expression whose prefix echoes the idea of (re)-union, the ego explains that he did these things by "fitting together" (*xunarmosas*; cf. *xunēgagon*, 1) or harmonizing force and justice. The same term (*harmosas*, 19), minus the prefix, recurs of Solon's legislative activity just a few lines on.

The repetition of *harmozō* is nothing if not emphatic, and for an ancient audience would bring Solon's poetic persona to center stage. As I discuss at greater length below, the singer regularly portrays himself as craftsman who "fits" his different materials together, uniting them in a harmonious and pleasing whole. Although the strictly musical practice of "tuning" to which the compound *sunarmozō* comes to refer is not attested before sources of the later fifth and fourth centuries, the figure of the poet-composer as "concordizer" who reconciles warring political elements by virtue of his music – albeit on the lyre – and song appears at an earlier period.[2] Impossible to date, but clearly canonical by the fourth century, is the tale of the Lesbian Terpander's intervention in Spartan politics.[3] In our earliest explicit reference to this semi-legendary citharode's resolution of civic strife, Demetrius of Phalerum – cited again by our scholia to *Odyssey* 3.267 – remarks:

> And so much did the music of the citharodes extend to political affairs that they say that the polis of the Spartans was most of all assisted by these men in regard to both civic concord and the safeguarding of the *nomoi*, and that the Pythian oracle, when disorder was arising in Sparta, told them to listen to the Lesbian Singer and to cease from their love of contention, which indeed came about.

Further conflating the musical and legislative domains, and exploiting, as Demetrius does, the legal and musical senses of *nomoi*, a second source aligns Terpander with the reforms of Lycurgus, and imagines him as the one who "set to music the *nomoi* of the Lacedaemonians" (Clement, *Stromata* 1.16.78). The role assigned to citharodic performances is extended to other forms of poetry: according to Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* 4, Thaletas was said to have cloaked his law-giving in the guise of song.[4]

The intermix of Solon's poetic competence and his actions in the political domain continues through the remainder of the song. Recalling his refusal to pander to either of the contending factions, he declares that he aimed to "please" (*hēndanen*) neither of the parties. Theognis, whose analogous stance as law-giver (albeit with a different political agenda) and poet others have explored,[5] uses the same verb to describe responses to his elegies, including it twice in the so-called "sphragis" poem where he acknowledges that works bearing his seal will not find favor (*haden*) among all his townsmen, even as Zeus cannot "please" (*handanei*) everyone with the weather he dispenses (fr. 24–26 W). While Solon reserves *handanō* for his political activity both here and in other compositions (Loraux 1988, 122), in the immediate context of the

song's performance, "pleasing" also becomes a matter of audience response: the political program that found favor with none risks provoking the same reaction when now re-enacted in poetic form, a danger that the work's display of "harmonic" powers can obviate. Indeed, Solon may acknowledge the poet's obligation to please in another work unequivocally concerned with poetry; designating Mimnermus *Liguaistadē* in fr. 20.3 W, he devises an elaborate pun which designates his target "the clear-voiced singer" (*ligus* + *aidein*) or, alternately, the one who "pleases" (*handanein*) with his sweet-voiced song (Noussia-Fantuzzi 2010, 403).

The much-discussed closing image where Solon assumes the likeness of a wolf "making [*poieomenos*] defense" nods anew to the two personas featured in the composition. Avoiding the more usual epic expressions – where heroes "put on" martial or defensive strength in the manner of a breastplate or other protective device – the verb does double service here. Fr. 20 W proves freshly relevant to the first of its two referents: proposing a correction to Mimnermus' view of old age as articulated in one of his works, Solon chooses *metapoiein* for his act of poetic revision. As Maria Noussia-Fantuzzi observes (2010, 403), this is our first example of the application of *poiein* to composing poetry as Solon figures the process not as the result of divine inspiration but of authorial "construction" instead; read this way, the defense "made" or "fashioned" by the poetic ego in fr. 36 takes the form of the poetic performance that countered the statesman's detractors, portrayed here as the dogs who, from Homeric poetry on, emblematize abusive speakers (Graver 1995). One final "meta-poetic" element informs the conceit: as the unjustified target of vilification now turning on his abusers, Solon glances towards the iambic meter used for the fragment, and to the genre particularly accommodating to the wolf.[6]

At the risk of anachronism, I would also see a reference to Solon's legislative activity here as the poet anticipates the commonplace fifth-century use of *poiein* for making laws; just as the *thesmoi* just described afford all Athenians the same safeguards, now Solon claims these laws as the protective device that he applied to his own person. It comes as no surprise to discover later sources using *poiein* now of Solon's poetry, now of his *nomoi*.[7] A glance to the poem's factural dimension implicit in *poieomenos* also makes sense in light of the speaker's declaration "I wrote down the *thesmoi*." The statement offers an exact structural, dictional, and syntactical counterpart to Solon's earlier claim of having freed the land and people, neatly answering to the account of taking up the subjugating *horoi*; reinforcing the idea of the substitution of one form of "fixed" or established marker with another, the term *thesmos*, derived from *tithēmi*, re-sounds the earlier notion of the stones' emplacement. Audiences would, moreover, be familiar with the actual objects that had displaced the divisive demarcations. Soon after their promulgation, Solon's laws were inscribed on the 16-plus *axones* and *kurbeis* set up on the

Athenian Acropolis and in front of which archons beginning their term of office would pronounce their oaths. Where, before Solon's intervention, the markers fixed in the ground (some inscribed, although the earliest extant Attic *horoi* with writing postdate Solon) denied Athenians equality of access, now the newly erected wood and bronze enact, in no less monumentalized and permanent form, the abolition of distinctions between citizens, who all enjoy "harmonic" rights by virtue of the laws.[8]

In foregrounding the act of writing, Solon not only recalls the inscription of his *thesmoi*, but also suggests the concomitant passage of his poetry-in-performance into textual form. As Nicole Loraux's subtle discussion argues (Loraux 1988), within Solon and in the later testimonia, distinctions between the statesman's legislative and poetic output are repeatedly occluded, if not effaced, and the coalescence that Loraux observes should extend to this moment of transcription. Scholars tend to dismiss the notion found in post-Classical sources that Solon composed his laws in hexameter verse, and suggest that the tradition attributing to Charondas the practice of writing laws in hexameters, which were then sung at symposia, may have influenced our later authors here. But fr. 31 W, two hexameter lines which furnish a proem to a song, present the *thesmoi* in just this light, investing those laws with the status of poetry:[9] "First let us pray to Zeus, son of Cronos, king, to grant these laws good fortune and glory." Just as fr. 13.2–4 invites the Muses to listen to the poet's prayers and grant him "blessedness and a good reputation," so here Zeus, who takes the lead in legislative activity, is invoked as tutelary deity as the speaker composes his *thesmoi*. Indeed, the very term *thesmoi* allows Solon further to blend his poetic, "nomothetic," and graphic personas; in his Salamis song (fr. 1–3 W), the speaker assumes the guise of a herald (another commonplace figure for the poet) "making/composing an ornament of words, a song instead of a speech" (*kosmon epeōn ōidēn ant' agorēs themenos*, fr. 1.2 W); in a twist on fr. 36, the speaker conflates not poetry and lawmaking, but song and a political address, here further imagined, in a departure from Homeric diction where a speech well composed is styled *kata kosmon*, as a materialized "ornament" set up or "put together" in place of the more ephemeral verbal address.

But the transcription of poeticized *thesmoi* does not mark the end to the metamorphoses here. In performing fr. 36, Solon, or whoever took on the singer's part, transforms these textualized injunctions back into oral form, glossing their content and underlying intent, and reasserting the presence of the poet/statesman who gave them a first sounding. It would be left to Callimachus to close the circle: in fr. 103 Pf., the Hellenistic poet makes the inscribed *kurbis* "sing" (*kurbis aeidei*).

Symposiast

Placing fr. 36 back in its performative context alerts us to the additional role-playing within the piece: neither verse-maker nor law-giver (or rather some meld of the two), the poem's voice has been assumed by the symposiast entertaining his fellow guests. While scholars regularly note the possibility that some of Solon's works were given more public airing, the symposium remains the only securely attested site for poems of this kind, and there is no mistaking the sympotic setting framing many of Solon's extant compositions.[10] The testimonia and visual sources round out our picture of the statesman as symposiast. One anecdote presents him drinking together with his nephew whom he directs to teach him a song of Sappho (Aelian *ap* Stobaeus *Florilegium* 3.29.58), and a cup in London by Oltos, dated to *c*.510–500, portrays Solon in exactly this milieu, as one of three ephebic komasts, their names inscribed, who dance.[11] But if much of the lyric corpus was performed at the drinking party, the sympotic identity paraded in so many songs would not, in each and every instance, have been an unmediated reflection of its performer's status and circumstances. Instead, I suggest, we should treat this symposiast as another "figure" within a poet's repertoire, and one again first visible in epic song.

The delineation of what it means to be a sympotic poet, familiar with the conventions that the role included, makes a very early appearance in a seemingly unlikely setting. Scholars seeking indications that Homeric epic was familiar with occasions recognizable as symposia, complete with musical and poetical entertainment, focus chiefly on the Odyssean banquets staged in the well-appointed homes of Odysseus and Alkinous, where the bards Phemius and Demodocus entertain the company. But these *aoidoi* emphatically do not belong to the company of diners; both are professionals summoned from without, *dēmiourgoi* ("public workers"; so *Odyssey* 17.383) who play and sing at the behest of their elite sponsors. For an individual whose postprandial performance involves his self-conscious embrace of the role of symposiast, we need to go instead to the lowly hut of Eumaeus and to Odysseus' "star turn" at the party hosted there.[12]

First, the morphology of the occasion, and Odysseus' display of his sympotic credentials. Eumaeus' declaration at *Odyssey* 14.407, "now it is time for our evening meal," initiates the episode, which conforms in most respects to what commentators classify as a "dining type scene." But for all its traditional veneer, several details depart from normative epic practice and cohere with a more sympotic-style gathering. Eumaeus' event, like the Archaic symposium and in twofold distinction to banquets on Scheria, is a nighttime party and occurs among a select group of men. Like the later drinking party too, those gathered in the hut are members of the same social (and professional) milieu: all swineherds, and, as Eumaeus characterizes his guests at 407, *hetairoi*, the term used by Archilochus, Alcaeus, and other poets for their sympotic addressees. Significant too is the evening's clear division into two: the food

has been taken away and the guests are preparing to leave when Odysseus, in his beggar's guise, intervenes. The break that the narrative signals between the conclusion of the meal (455) and the fresh start initiated by Odysseus parallels the way in which the standard symposium described by later sources included two discrete parts: first the dinner, then the drinking party proper, with performances of speech and song reserved for the latter portion.

The scene set, Homer then signals the agenda framing Odysseus' intervention (459–461): "Odysseus spoke among them, making trial of the swineherd to see if he might take off his cloak and give it to him, or tell one of his companions to do it, since he cared for him so much." The term *peirētizōn* ("making trial of") pointedly positions the story as a challenge for its audience. Andrew Ford, citing Theognis 125–128, 571–572 (where forms of the same verb appear) and 1013–1016, notes the continuity between this initial characterization of Odysseus' address and the language of later sympotic poetry, where just this type of "testing" appears (Ford 1999, 113).[13] Theognis uses his songs as a means of probing his fellow symposiasts' ethics and character, of telling friend from enemy; so too the story will allow Odysseus to gauge the nature and sentiments of Eumaeus and his fellow herdsmen toward him, even as it allows the speaker still further to conceal his own identity.[14]

Before embarking on his story, the beggar offers his own introduction (463–467):

> "Hear me now Eumaeus and all you other companions. I will speak a word that is a bit of boasting, for the wine that makes a man silly impels me, wine that sets even one who is very intelligent to singing and laughing softly and dancing, and to emit a word which would perhaps be better unspoken. Since I have now raised my voice to a shout, I will not hide it."

It is here that Odysseus most explicitly embraces his self-selected persona and, furnishing the necessary generic cues, plays into an external audience's expectations. His "meta-sympotic" commentary on the nature of what the company is about to listen to,[15] complete with the warning that it may transgress the bounds of propriety, anticipates poets of the seventh and sixth centuries who, in self-validating nods toward their own salubrious and harmony-producing ends, likewise acknowledge the risk of indecorous sympotic speech. In the prescriptions for the ideal gathering in fr. 1 W, Xenophanes strictly circumscribes the type of stories admissible, with the exclusion of anything improper or that might turn the drinkers' thoughts to conflict and dissent. In the view of an anonymous elegist from the late Classical age, the task of "good men" at the symposium is to contribute "fair speech" (*eulogian*, Anon. eleg. 27.10 *IEG*), hardly the mode of discourse that the Homeric hero envisages here. The self-consciousness that Odysseus displays in regard to the (in)decorum of his coming story also distinguishes

this performance from other commentaries on speeches or songs delivered at the poem's other banquets: more typically these concern the veracity, charm, orderliness, or verisimilitude of the storyteller or bard's contribution.

Closely related to the possibility of "unbounded" speech is the role of wine in the scenario Odysseus imagines. In the course of four lines, the speaker not only promotes drink to center stage but, much as vase painters figuring symposia on fifth-century drinking vessels would do, sketches out its role in what constitutes a virtual "program" of the activities that the standard symposium includes as guests become ever more inebriated (Ion of Chios offers a counterpart in fr. 27.5–8 W, "let us drink, let us play, let the song go through the night. Let someone dance; willingly begin the gaiety"). Also singular here, and distinguishing the coming anecdote from the narratives/ songs that other Homeric banquets include, is the first of the actions that wine impels. Whereas the *aoidos*, whether Homer or Demodocus, sings under the incitement of the Muses (compare *anēken* at 8.73 with the similar *anōgei* at 14.463), here drink prompts the coming tale (Von Reden 1995, 41).

With this by way of preface, Odysseus begins his story, a narrative that details an incident from the Trojan War when he – or the hapless individual whom he feigns to be – found himself cloakless on a bitterly cold night, and gained the necessary garment through the skilled verbal intervention of his fellow soldier Odysseus. The tale is particularly apposite to my theme, not only because its many "meta-sympotic" elements – events occur at night, among a group of companions-in-arms reclining in an ambush and testing and tricking one another with their words – show the performer again declaring his membership of the "in-group," but because here too we witness the narrator adopting yet another persona to add to his several masks (hero turned beggar turned symposiast), and treating the company to a mode of discourse thoroughly at home within the sympotic space.

The symposiast-as-soldier is a well-known fixture in the cast of characters whose roles later sympotic poets adopt (Bowie 1990), and Archilochus proves particularly adept at juggling these two of his self-selected identities: in several iambic songs, he conflates the warrior bivouacking or mounting guard aboard ship with the diner reclining on his couch, one using his spear as prop or lying on the hard bench of the vessel, the other recumbent in the comfort of the *andrōn* (frr. 2 and 4 W). Vase painters similarly juxtapose the two settings; one side of a red-figure volute krater (the sympotic vessel par excellence) in Rome shows warriors crouched in ambush, the other drinkers at a symposium;[16] such ambush scenes are also commonplace on other vessels used by symposiasts, wine jugs, cups, and skyphoi, from the late Archaic period on. But Archilochus is relevant to Odysseus' performance for more than his superimpositions of the hardships of the martial sphere onto the delights of his performative context. As Aristotle tells us (*Rhetorica* 1418b27), when delivering himself of something tending toward "abuse or

boorishness," the Parian poet would speak in a voice not his own, taking on the character of Charon the carpenter in one iambic song, the father of a daughter in another.

The "voice" in which Odysseus tells his story, that of an erstwhile soldier now beggar down on his luck, closely resembles not just the personas of Archilochus, but those of the penurious, hungry, and, in one instance, cloakless Hipponax (see particularly frr. 32, 34, 36, 39 W). Of course Hipponax, whose borrowings from the *Odyssey* have been well documented,[17] may be taking a leaf from the Homeric poem; but, following the model earlier outlined, "influence" may be traveling the other way too. If the mask of beggar, renegade soldier, and cloakless individual was a recognizable convention associated with a certain style of poetic performance, and one suited to a particular milieu, then Odysseus' choice to recount a story in this narrative voice declares his tale's generic identity and stands further proof of his conscious embrace of his sympotic entertainer's role.

With so many cues, it is no wonder that Eumaeus, one of the poem's more acute listeners, correctly identifies the nature of the performance and its underlying agenda. After Odysseus is done, the swineherd describes his tale as a blameless *ainos* (508). This retrospective designation has given commentators pause; some accounts link it to the other Homeric usages of the term, where it typically means "praise," while others grant it the meaning it takes on in other sources and in later ancient definitions, a story with a covert meaning. But I would suggest that here Homer most fully tips his hand, telling his audience that they have just witnessed Odysseus in his roles of symposiast and even proto-iambographer: the narrative not only displays elements that characterize *ainoi* in Archaic sources (most particularly its incipit, but also its mockery of Thoas, complete with the pun on his name), but its very presence aligns the performance with that turned in by iambic poets performing at the symposium: theirs is the genre that, more than any other form of Archaic poetry, deploys the *ainos* to drive home the works' sometimes abusive or subversive messages, and that features an ego that resembles that of the fable-teller: from Hesiod on, the fabulist regularly presents himself as an often lower-status, disadvantaged individual who may have suffered injury at the hands of a stronger party, and against whom he seeks, through telling his barbed *ainos*, redress.

The meta-sympotic aspects of Odysseus' contribution to Eumaeus' feast do not exhaust the mirroring aspects of the episode. While most scholars remain persuaded that Panhellenic and some local festivals remain the most likely sites for the performance of Homeric epic, Oswyn Murray's discussion proposes a different and intriguing scenario for the *Odyssey* (Murray 2008): that the poem, with its unmistakable preoccupation with dining and drinking decorum, and repeated scenes of banquets both correctly conducted and more frequently gone awry, is designed for the symposium, with the bard reciting

his piece in segments before the assembled drinkers. If Murray is correct, then the *aoidos* performing in the person of Odysseus selects for this late-night hour the kind of sympotic challenge, riffing, and self-denigration well calculated to suit the present mood of the company.

Seemingly far removed from Odysseus' demonstration of how to do sympotic poetry is Pindar's later appropriation of the same "figure" in those several passages in his epinicia and other songs where he positions himself at the lavish affairs hosted by his patrons in their homes.[18] Part of his broader self-projection as participant in a guest–host relationship, Pindar's references to the institution incorporate sympotic practices of several kinds; so on one occasion the poetic ego belongs to the group gathered around the table of the pre-eminently rich and hospitable Hieron (*Olympian* 1.16–19); more extended references to the institution occur at *Olympian* 7.1–10, this a betrothal symposium, at *Nemean* 9.46–55, with the singer by the krater, and at *Isthmian* 6.1–9, where the performance is mapped onto the triple libation poured at the outset of the affair.

Again, relations between persona and context prove complex. It is very likely that many Pindaric odes would be performed, or more probably re-performed, at the more or less private symposia that celebrated and commemorated an athletic win after the poem's initial enactment at the city-wide reception of the victor on his return, and that the "symposiast" who sang the song (almost certainly as a monody) was exactly what he claimed within the composition – host of or guest at the event. The insertion of such a figure into the ode also makes good business sense: how better to promote future re-soundings of the poem than to "write in" a part exactly calibrated to the individual who would take on the author/performer's role? But a strong element of fantasy, even wish fulfillment, may inform the poet's deployment of this sympotic voice when he performed in his own person. An itinerant professional who hires himself out for pay, and who on occasion makes an explicit bid for remuneration (shades of Odysseus here), the encomiastic is unlikely to have been accepted on grounds of equality within the local sympotic circle; instead, by assuming a role that already exists within the standard repertoire, and by showing his familiarity with the mores of his paymasters, the poet combines this endorsement and celebration of the elite practices of (at least one portion of) his audience with a status bid.

Intriguingly, an exactly comparable stratagem is visible in the contemporary visual repertoire, most markedly on vessels designed to circulate at symposia. Several recent discussions have observed how vase painters of the late Archaic and early Classical age, particularly those belonging to the Pioneer group, liked to include self-portraits, or representations of other artists, within the sympotic scenes (and at the other elite venues) depicted on their vessels: a well-known late sixth-century stamnos in Brussels by Smikros shows the artist at the drinking party, indistinguishable (but for the inscription

identifying him) from the other symposiasts.[19] For Richard Neer, who documents the low social position of potters and painters (styled *banausoi* in fifth- and fourth-century sources) in late Archaic and Classical Athens, the device not only grants the painters the desired publicity but also serves by way of challenge to existing class distinctions, a means whereby these artisans could "insert themselves into elite milieux" (Neer 2002, 122). In Ann Steiner's view, the self-depictions act more as recognizable fictions, there to generate "opportunities for ridicule and gamesmanship among elites" as the artist positions himself as a potential target for wit and hilarity from the vessels' audience, particularly when one of their number is gulled into assuming the voice of this déclassé (Steiner 2007, 262); rather than suggesting that place should be made for the painter at the drinking party, the portraits offer instances of what narratologists call the "constructed self," egos distinguishable from their originals. This account offers a second perspective on Pindar's sympotic persona and nuances the reading proposed above. Borrowing his identity from members of the exclusive circle within his audience, he offers them what they can recognize as a construct, thereby reinforcing the bonds of solidarity between the members of an exclusive company by this acknowledgment of his marginal status.

Fabricant and Donor

Among the sympotic passages cited above, *Olympian* 7 and *Isthmian* 6 introduce the Pindaric poem in the context of a precious object, the heirloom *phialē* or valuable cup from which the song-libation is poured. Several elements of these visualizations are apposite to the final "figure" investigated here, which positions the poet/performer as participant in the ritual act of presenting a self-made and highly crafted gift to a god. Visible, for reasons that will become clear, chiefly among choral poets, this individual again has his antecedents in hexameter compositions, and chiefly in an episode which demonstrates both why the precious good, regularly termed an *agalma*, proves so handy a comparandum for choral performances, and why the poet who composes the piece and leads the choristers in their song-dance should assume the craftsman's role. That the object-cum-musical event then becomes a votive offering to the divine turns out to depend on the ritual context framing both *choreia* and *agalmata* and illuminates further dimensions of the identity that the poet – or, in many instances, the collective "choral I" performing in a civic context – assigns him or herself.

The epic episode ushering in this craftsman-poet occurs in Hephaestus' forge in *Iliad* 18, where we witness the divine metallurgist fashioning the penultimate band on Achilles' shield (595–605):

> And on it the very famous one with crooked limbs was elaborately crafting a *choros*, like to the one that once in broad Knossos Daedalus fashioned

> for lovely-locked Ariadne. And there the young men and girls who bring many oxen to their parents were dancing, having their hands upon one another's wrists. And of these, the girls had fine garments of delicate linen, and the youths had chitons that were well-spun and softly glistening with oil; and the girls had beautiful diadems and the youths had golden knives (hanging) from belts of silver. And at times they were running on well-skilled feet, very smoothly, as when a potter who is seated tests the wheel fitted to his hands, to see if it runs; and at others they were running in rows up to one another. And a great throng was standing about the desirable chorus taking delight. And two tumblers among them gave the lead to the song-and-dance and whirl about in their midst.

For commentators since antiquity, Homer introduces Hephaestus' creation of the shield as metonym for his own activity; drawing on a conceit visible in other poetry stemming from the Indo-European tradition, where the poet is equated with the craftsman who weaves, stitches, and assembles his compositions, he implicitly likens his song to this most glorious artifact. But lost in most discussions is the question of why Homer reserves a *choral* scene for the capstone element, distinguishing this penultimate band through the use of *poikille* at the outset of the description (much blander "factural" verbs appear in the lines introducing previous rings) and the inclusion of two similes. As a look to later choral poetry suggests, there are intimate links between these performances of dance and song, and the set of objects whose quintessence we see in the making here.[20]

Within the visualization cited above, Homer supplies a ready checklist of the qualities that Greeks looked for in works of artistry and that, not coincidentally, recommended these types of products for their role as both metaphoric figures for choral poems and actual votive goods. First and foremost, luminosity, the brilliance that emanates from the precious metal from which the dancers, no less than their accessories, down to the tunics slick with oil, are forged.[21] Second, the impression of movement, already integral to the property announced by the opening verb *poikille*, which encompasses a motion-filled sparkle; *poikilia*, Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux explains, denotes a "luminosité bigarrée et … scintillement" (Frontisi-Ducroux 2002, 465), which makes the metal figures seem to shift and move. The focus on the dancers' feet, whose swift and measured steps Homer compares to the gyrations of the "running" potter's wheel, reinforces the kinesis. Next, the decoration, ornamentation, and complexity of the ensemble again signaled by *poikille*, and that depend on the combination of different metals, textures, colors, and techniques. And finally, the relief's capacity to inspire not just pleasure on the part of an audience, but that more powerful quasi-erotic response announced at 603: the chorus is *himorenta*, causing viewers to experience the desire typically instigated by youthful bodies exhibiting themselves in the dance.

A locus of debate since antiquity, the term *choros* in the opening line carries several possible meanings: while most assume that Homer has a dancing floor fashioned by Daedalus in mind (and archaeologists have documented the attention lavished on these surfaces at sacred sites), Pausanias views it as a reference to a marble relief of dancers that the craftsman carved as decoration for a dance hall;[22] it is these figures that the divine artisan copies and seemingly animates. Daedalus bears centrally on my argument because, as a scholion to *Iliad* 18.591–592 records, he supposedly acted as chorus leader after Theseus' victory over the Cretan Minotaur: "when Theseus emerged after his victory with the young men and maidens, he wove [*epleken*] such a *choros* in circular formation for the gods … Daedalus devised the craft of the *choreia* [*tēs choreias tēn empeirian … epoiēsen*] and showed it to them."[23] Not only does the annotator imagine Daedalus treating the living bodies as though they were the material elements with which the fabricant works (so *epleken*, *epoiēsen*), but the chorus leader also fashions his performers into a votive good. From here it is a brief step to the choral poetry which, beginning already in the seventh century, both invests the dancers with all the attributes of highly crafted objects, and frames them and their performance as gifts designed for the gods.

Both explicitly and implicitly, votives, both notional and real, possess the same attributes that Homer here and elsewhere assigns to choral dancers and that the chorus members grant themselves in their self-presentations in lyric compositions.[24] Again, radiance, *poikilia*, and motion occupy pride of place. Epic and hymnal poetry as well as choral lyric bring together these several qualities as they focus on the "flashings" of the dancers' fast-moving feet; the noun *marmarugai*, the term typically used for the choreuts' steps, is cognate with *marmaros*, marble, the material of choice for so many Greek votive and cult statue makers on account of its brilliance, sparkle, and translucence;[25] Bacchylides assigns this same sheen to the opulent gold cauldrons dedicated by the Deinomenids to Apollo at Delphi (3.17–21). Radiance, as well as the other properties of the Homeric chorus, characterizes the maiden singers of Alkman's first *Partheneion*; drawing attention to their "cunningly wrought" (*poikilos*) golden bracelets (66–69), the singers also celebrate their leader Hagesichora, who "shines forth like unalloyed gold, and her face is of silver" (53–55). While, like Alkman's plough (or more likely robe)-bearing *parthenoi*, some choruses cite the votive objects they offer to the gods, in many instances, the chorus short-circuits this by figuring itself as that gift. As the work of Joseph Day (2000, 2010) and Mary Depew (1997, 2000) explores, the terms in which the singers describe themselves, their actions, functions, and ornamentation correlate closely with the inscriptions on votive objects, whether statues, reliefs, or other goods, which similarly record the act of dedication and broadcast their possession of the *charis* and sparkle (a quality implicit in the term *agalma*, cognate with *aglaos*, *aglaizō*, and *aglē*) [26] that likewise characterizes choral dancers. In a work of unknown genre, but most

likely a paean, Pindar equates a paean by an earlier poet with a highly worked object of dedication (so *anethēke*, fr. 140b.7 S-M), a chariot "shrill" (*ligu*) and "well-woven" (*euplekes*).[27] While the second term glances to the choristers joined hand in hand in the dancing circle, the first, regularly used of singers and instruments, draws attention to the acoustics of the performance. An analogous blend of craft, *choreia*, and dedication occurs in the well-known passage describing the Deliades in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (146–166). First highlighting the *charis* that irradiates the chorus and spectators both, and the *terpsis* that a witness to the scene would feel, the hymnist goes on to describe the wonder of the hymns performed by the maidens in honor of the gods, "so beautifully is their song fitted together [*sunarēren*]" (164).[28]

But the synthesis between poet, performer, skilled artisan, and donor can be closer still, and most visibly in several Pindaric passages featuring *agalmata* that the "choral I" dedicates to the gods. As in fr. 140b, what the poet has in mind is not just the verbal element, the piece as a composite of words, but the entirety of the performance – music, song, dance, and visual spectacle – that he and his chorus members jointly stage. The precious goods to which Pindar compares these performances possess all the qualities we have seen in choral dancers and votive objects: complexity and preciosity (so the interwoven crown of ivory, coral and gold at *Nem* 7. 77–79), radiance (the far-shining façade and golden columns of *Olympian* 6.1–4), movement (the *agalma* that gets down from its pedestal at *Nemean* 5.1–2), *charis* (*Olympian* 7.1–5 and *Nemean* 3.12–13); also like the offering as the votive inscriptions characterize it, the poet declares the song a *kosmos* (fr. 194 S.–M.).

Among the richest realizations of the fabricant-cum-votary conceit occurs in the prelude to *Nemean* 8, a work composed on behalf of an Aigenetan victor, where Pindar uses the "choral I" to imagine his performers in the act of presenting the gift-that-is-their-performance to the island's tutelary hero (12–17):

> As a suppliant I am grasping the holy knees of Aiakos, and on behalf of this beloved city and of these citizens I am bearing a Lydian fillet intricately worked [*pepoikilmenan*] with sounding notes, an *agalma* for the double stadion races of Deinias and his father Megas. For truly when it is planted with divine sanction happiness is more steadfast for men.

Performing a song reified into the likeness of the victory ribbon or wreath that an athlete might present as thanks offering to a local hero or god, the chorus highlights those qualities of the object deemed to elicit pleasure and so reciprocity on the part of the heroized recipient, whom the gift goes on to solicit for a continuation of the current blessedness: alongside its display of variegation and complexity (witness the headband worn by the seventh-century bronze statuette dedicated by one Mantiklos, its surface incised with three decorative patterns, each requiring the use of a different tool),[29] the

fillet's musical aspect adds a further element. The sound that the object issues conflates not just song and offering, but implicates the chorus too; insofar as the singers are the source of the notes – and most likely they were themselves wreathed – they become one with that tuneful headband. The adjective "Lydian" both anticipates this aural quality, signaling the *harmonia* or rhythm of the song, and declares the consummate value and preciosity of this *agalma* – Lydia was the *dernier cri* in luxury objects. Choral performance and the act of dedication form a particularly tight unit here: while the gestures that the chorus evoke take their cue from the athlete presenting to Aiakos the tokens of his win, here those actions are further transformed into figures of the dance. As in so many choral descriptions, the singers go on include mention of their feet, the locus of their skill; just a few lines on, their lightness makes them poised for motion (*histamai dē possi kouphois*, 19); as in the prelude to *Nemean* 5, this "agalmatized" work is invested with the power to travel, to diffuse its subject's renown.

But like so many choruses in victory songs, Pindar's Aigenetan performers do more than celebrate the athlete and his family, the sponsors, perhaps, of the ongoing musical and visual tribute; they act "on behalf of this dear city" and the citizen-audience indicated and implicated by the deictic *tōnd*' in line 14. Anchored in the civic context, the epinician takes its place among other ritualized choral celebrations of the island's founding father and its divine patrons, neatly accommodating individualized and familial glory within this communal sphere and fashioning a votive designed to bring about civic good fortune.[30]

For all the way in which *tōnd*' situates the performance in the here and now, the phrase that follows also looks to the repeated quality of the occasion, its past and future lives. Lines 16–17 not only recall the contents of the victory announcement (the *aggelia*) pronounced by the herald as the athlete stepped up to claim his crown immediately following his win; integrated into the headband, they also take the form of the text preserving that announcement, subsequently inscribed on the votive good commemorating the event. Still more patently than before, the audience witnesses the chorus and votive forming a single whole: like those *oggetti parlanti* that the epigrams inscribed on the objects' surfaces endow with voice, the singers sound out the text, just as the reader of a votive would, that forms part of the *agalma*. The conceit takes us back to the composition of Solon earlier discussed, where the words pronounced by the poet-statesmen took the form of graphic notations only to be envoiced again through future performances of the poem. Like Solon, Pindar has his cake and eats it too. By objectifying the song in the likeness of an *agalma*, the poet guarantees its longevity – and notice the use of *parmonōteros* (17) with its succinct appeal to something that is "fixed" and enduring in the manner of a votive good; adding the inscription to the offering, he then invests it and the larger performance of which it forms a part

with the capacity for re-utterance. Dedicated in the sanctuary of Aiakos, where votives would be positioned and choral performances occur, it will be read by visitors to the site whose articulation of the text, albeit in monodic form, reiterates the petition to the tutelary spirit while celebrating the victor, his family and city – a guarantor, if ever there was one, that *olbos* will endure.

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FURTHER READING

Among the discussions spearheading the abandonment of the "biographical" approach to the figure of the poet and the conflation of the singer within a text, whether epic or lyric, with the real-world poet, was Griffith (1990), with additional explorations in Lefkowitz (1991) (treating epinician) and Slings (1990) and, with a different orientation, the essays in Figueira and Nagy (1985); the poet's construction of a persona within his texts is the premise that further informs many of the discussions in Budelmann (2009), and Detienne (1996) remains important on shifting notions of the character and social function of the poet. Pratt (1993) includes an exploration of the relations between Homer and the *aoidoi* in epic (see too Segal 1984), and Scodel (1998) offers a more minute scrutiny of distinctions between the two at the level of style and diction. The shift from a teleological view of Greek poetry to one that assumes the presence of multiple different genres suited to different sites and occasions finds an important early sounding in Dover (1964), subsequently developed and refined in, among others, the essays collected in *Arethusa* 1976 and Nagy (1990); Dalby (1998) offers a lively statement of the competitive relations between rhapsodes performing epic and the new-style choral poets (see too Burkert 1987), and Irwin (2005) supplies a nuanced discussion of the creative appropriation of the hexameter tradition by elegiac poets performing at symposia; Solon's variegated stance, and his coexistence roles as law-giver and poet, receives further treatment in several of the essays in Blok and Lardinois (2006). Stehle (1997) treats the

performative aspect of different forms of lyric poetry, and for the symposium in particular, Bowie (1986) and Murray (1990) present a wealth of different approaches; Bartol (1993) reviews the evidence for elegy and iambic song. Too frequently neglected, Svenbro (1976), building on the work of Lanata (1963), offers a rich account of the poet's self-construction as craftsman, and Kowalzig (2007), in addition to Day (2000, 2010) and Depew (1997, 2000), demonstrates how the ancient sources equate dedications and services to the gods with choral performances. Most recently, Power (2011) and Kurke (2012, 2013) address the overlaps between *choreia* and material goods and the vocabulary and concepts both sets of activities share.

NOTES

1 Demetrius of Phalerum fr. 144 Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf = scholia *ad* Od. 3.267.

2 The description of Hermes' invention of the lyre in *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 50–51 includes the same terms as Solon, differently arranged: *epi de zugon ēraren amphoin/ hepta de sumphōnous oiōn etanussato chordas*; the god also deploys the instrument so as to bring about his reconciliation with his brother.

3 For this I have drawn on the detailed discussion in Power (2001).

4 See Power (2001, 396–397).

5 See particularly Nagy (1985).

6 For this see Miralles and Pòrtulas (1983), Anhalt (1993, 126, 130–131), and Steiner (2011).

7 For the various sources, see Loraux (1988, 113–115).

8 While debate continues on the question of the precise function of these *horoi*, several of the essays in Blok and Lardinois (2006) agree that they marked off territory accessible only to members of the Athenian elite.

9 For arguments for and against the authenticity of the lines, see Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010, 521–522) with earlier bibliography; my argument assumes that they are the work of Solon.

10 Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010) treats the relevant fragments; the standard treatment for performative context remains Bowie (1986); see too Mülke (2002, 74).

11 British Museum E 19; *ARV*^{2} 63.95; for rich discussion, see Neer (2002, 150–154).

12 It is, perhaps, not surprising that this is the site where Homer stages his most patently sympotic gathering; in a "low life" scene, which smacks of the here and now and which, as commentators observe, requires frequent departures from or creative adaptations of epic diction and convention, the poet enjoys greater license for anachronism, and for the introduction of an institution that has no proper place in the heroic age. For more extensive treatment of this and other aspects of the episode, see Steiner (2012).

13 The precise way in which the story constitutes a test for Odysseus' fellow diners is something that only becomes clear after the *ainos* is done.

14 Cf. Plato *Leges* 652a.

15 See Murray (1994, 49) and Corner (2005, 125).

16 Museo Nazionale Etrusco 2225, ARV^2 223.2.

17 See particularly Rosen (1990).

18 See Clay (1999) and Kurke (1991) for these.

19 Brussels A 717; *ARV*^{2} 20.1, 1619.

20 My discussion is much indebted to the illuminating accounts of the overlap of *choreia* and crafted objects in Power 2010 and Kurke (2012 and 2013). I am most grateful to Leslie Kurke for allowing me an advance look at her discussion.

21 Both this brilliance and the desire cited below are singled out in Kurke's discussions (2012 and 2013).

22 For this, see Kurke (2012, 2013), Power (2011, 67–68), Frontisi-Ducroux (2002, 482–483), and Frontisi-Ducroux (1975/2000, 135–137), citing Callistratus *Statuarum Descriptiones* 3.5 (*choron ēskēse kinoumenon Daidalos*), Lucian *De Saltatione* 13, Philostratus *Imagines* 10. As Power (2011, 67) comments, read this way, ἔνθα at 593 would refer to the position on the shield where the chorus dances.

23 ∑ in Venetus A *ad* 18.591–592a (Erbse IV, p. 564); cf. Eustathius *ad loc*.

24 See Day (2010, esp. 255–256) for these.

25 Neer (2010, 73–77) offers a particularly evocative discussion of the stone; see too Kurke (2012).

26 For detailed analysis, see Day (2010, esp. 91–92).

27 For the first term, see the discussion in Rutherford (2001, 358); his analysis also treats the question of the work's genre.

28 See Peponi (2009) for detailed treatment of the passage.

29 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Francis Bartlett Collection, 03.997; on this, see Day (2010, 258).

30 On the way in which Pindar "negotiates" between civic and private interests through such images as these, see Kurke (1991).

CHAPTER 3
The Contexts and Experience of Poetry and Art in the Hellenistic World

Graham Zanker

Cosmopolitanism and the "Idea" of a Classic

When we turn from the Classical age to the Hellenistic period, perhaps the most striking feature of the Hellenistic aesthetic is its universality and inclusiveness. Poets no longer compose for a local city-state in which they participate, as the great tragedians of Athens most famously had done. Indeed, as we shall see, they also fragment the Classical model of performance contexts, the symposium or the festival, by the introduction of reading and by their fascination with mixing the literary genres. Poetry is now preserved or written to be appreciated anywhere in Greek-speaking lands. The shift of focus to private and personal universalities is an important facet of the Hellenistic aesthetic: audiences participated on a personal, rather than a political level bound to any one city-state. The best known example of this in literature is New Comedy, and in particular Menander, whose celebration of the universal experience of ordinary life outbalances political or national particularism. Aristophanes of Byzantium's question "Menander and life, which of you imitated the other?" is only one testimonial (T83 Kassel and Austin 1998, 25). In Hellenistic art, we find the extreme example of the sympathetic depiction of foreigners, even if they are foes. The Attalid group of the Suicidal Gaul and his Wife (Figure 3.1) evokes at least some vestigial pity for the warrior who defies his fate of being captured alive, and for his wife, whose life is in its last stage after her husband has dealt her his mortal wound.[1] Pollitt calls this "the cosmopolitan outlook" (Pollitt 1986, 10–13).

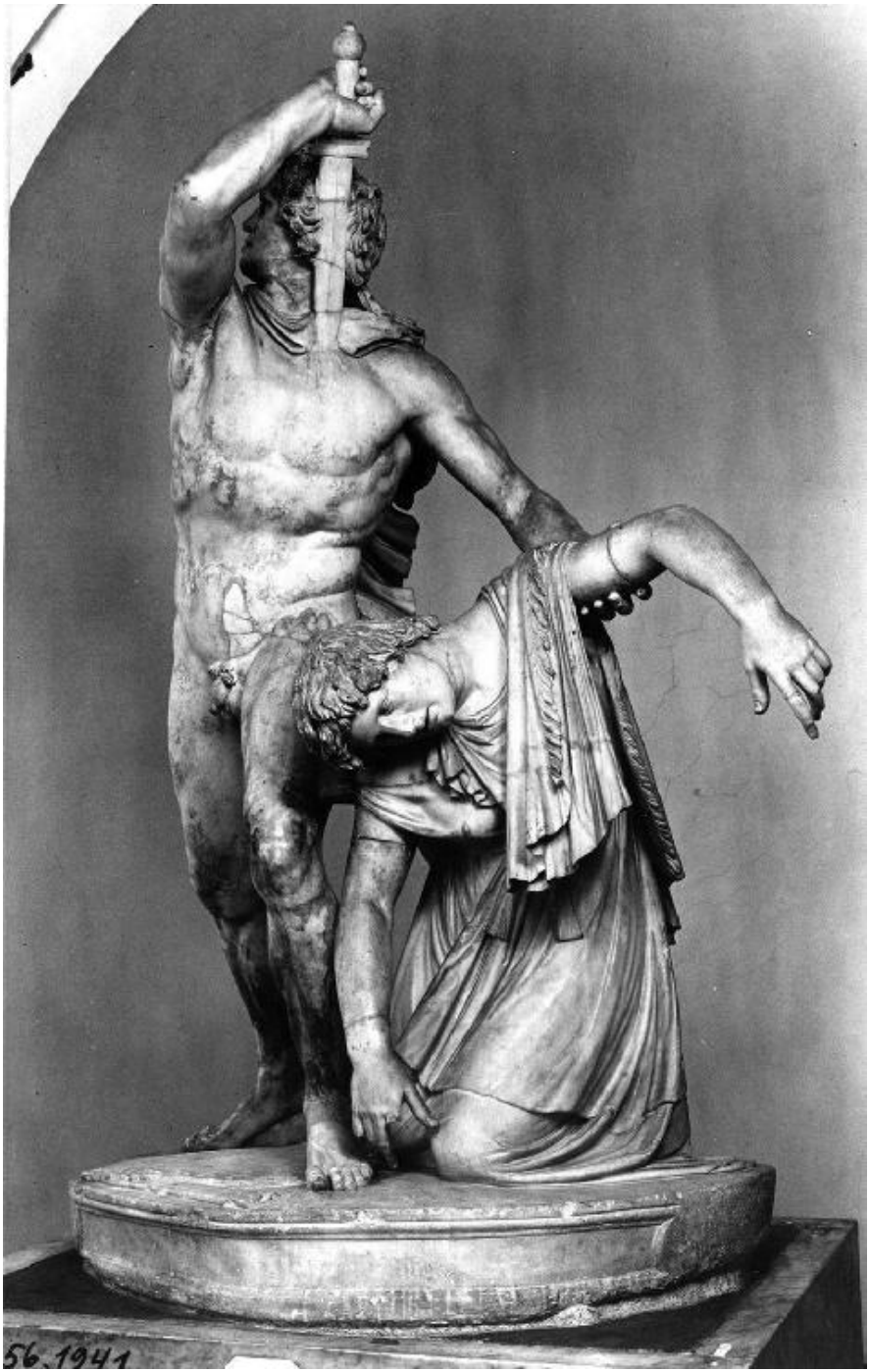

Figure 3.1 Ludovisi Gaul: Suicidal Gaul. Museo Nazionale Romano (Terme), Rome. Sansaini, DAI negative number 56.349.

By the same token, a second, related feature of the Hellenistic aesthetic is the age's concern to locate itself vis-à-vis the poetry and art of the Hellenic past,

to define its identity and its newness. This is amply illustrated by what we know of the theater in Hellenistic times. Despite the paucity of direct evidence in the form of texts other than those from New Comedy, we know that tragedy, comedy, and satyr-plays continued to be written and performed. In fact, performance opportunities burgeoned to an unprecedented level. The Hellenistic regents established new festivals and theatrical contests, as we see from Theocritus' praise of Ptolemy II Philadelphus: "Nor has any man who has skill in raising his clear-voiced song come for the sacred contests of Dionysus without receiving the reward his art deserves, and the mouthpieces of the Muses sing of Ptolemy in return for his benefactions" (*Id*. 17.112–116). They also had an extensive theater-building program.

Moreover, the age produced a quite remarkable system for disseminating drama whether Classical or contemporary. This consisted of theatrical associations, those of the Artists of Dionysus, who catered for the vast and growing demands of the festivals of the Mediterranean.[2] We know that the four major associations, the Athenian, the Egyptian and Cypriote, the Isthmian and Nemean, and the Ionian and Hellespontine, provided everything in the way of personnel and stage props necessary for dramatic productions, from playwrights to stage hands, and that their efficiency stretched to coordinating their separate forces to man every festival, old or new, whether they sent troupes to the festivals run by the regents, whether they ran festivals themselves or whether they ran them in collaboration with the monarchs (Aneziri 2003, 267–289), though evidence has been found in the victors' lists which demonstrates that local citizens did indeed compete together with the "professionals" all over Greece, especially providing choruses for choral contests (Wilson 2000, 265–302, 308–310). New plays, whether composed by groups like the Pleiad at Alexandria, the city's seven leading tragedians, or by the poets of the associations, were performed alongside re-plays of the dramas of the Classical period (Le Guen 2001, 9–11, 105–132).

The associations provide the surest evidence of the continuing and growing popularity of theatrical performance in the age, and of how drama was disseminated all over the Greek centers old and new. The cosmopolitan tendency of New Comedy must have seemed a gift to the theater companies: such theater could be transported anywhere in Greek lands.

The transposition of theater from the polis-centred Dionysiac festivals of Attica to new cultural contexts with differing local cult associations came with inevitable consequences for contemporary Hellenistic drama, most obviously the relegation or total omission of the chorus (cf. Le Guen 2001, 108–109), and the division of both tragedy and comedy into five acts. By the time of Menander, this had become standard practice in comedy, and, to judge from the *Exagogē* of Ezekiel, of tragedy as well. At the same time, when the tragedy and comedy of the Classical period were reperformed, their original civic impact must have become comparatively muted, conveying, as it has

accurately been formulated (Hunter 2004b, 433), the "idea" of tragedy and comedy, whereby they had become to some extent abstracted from the city-state experience of theater, and objectified by their status as "classics." This is not to say that tragic figures like Medea lost any of their power: the fact that they continued to speak to people's lives is another part of the universalism of the Hellenistic age.

The canonization of the "classics" must have been accelerated at Alexandria under the first three Ptolemies by the scholarly activity in the Museum. The active tragic playwright and composer of the *Alexandra*, Lycophron, for instance, was one of the most important of the scholars in the Museum for the textual analysis and interpretation of comedy (Pfeiffer 1968, 106–107, 119–120). Alexander the Aetolian was also one of the tragic Pleiad, simultaneously revising the texts of the Classical tragedies and satyr-plays (Pfeiffer 1968, 105-8, 119). Machon the comedian instructed Aristophanes of Byzantium in certain aspects of comedy, so he must have been a scholar as well (Gow 1965, 6–7; Pfeiffer 1968, 160). It is interesting that his epitaph, written by Dioscorides (24 Gow and Page 1965; 24 Galán Vioque 2001), calls Machon "not a frequently washed [i.e. worn out] garment but remains [*leipsanon* plays on the two meanings, "a remnant" and "mortal remains"] worthy of the ancient art 'of Old Comedy,'" which revealingly illustrates the concept of the "idea" which its Hellenistic heir and descendant should live up to – but there is still a rift. Events, time, and distance objectified, bringing with them a radically changed aesthetic response to the drama of the "masters." Divorced from their political context by both time and geography, Attic tragedy and comedy must have felt to some degree remote from Hellenistic experience, and hence to some extent an abstract exercise in "retrieval," however powerful their universal appeal.

A further factor is that, in addition to actual public performance, the tendency had become established for Classical dramatic texts to be anthologized, presumably for private reading, and to be given monologue recitation in settings like the symposium. Amusing evidence of the practice is Theophrastus' observations on the Grouch who refuses to sing or recite speeches (*rhēsin eipein*) at banquets (Theophrastus, *Characters* 15.10.), and on the Late Learner who learns speeches to recite them at a symposium – only to forget what comes next over the wine (Theophrastus, *Characters* 27.2–3). Here again, the aim was maximal impact for minimal time of delivery, the "star turn," as Richard Hunter puts it (Hunter 2004b, 439). Hellenistic audiences cannot have participated in the Classical plays in the way their original audiences did a century or more before: they had become canonical, and so were perceived as on a plane higher than their successors.

We have scant direct evidence for the quality of the drama composed by the associations or the Pleiad, but such testimony as we have does not contradict the likely conjecture that it must have been kept on the level of cultural,

historical, and regional generality. Since drama was now written to be performed anywhere in the Hellenistic world this would seem a natural development, and is paralleled by the age's fascination with New Comedy, especially Menander. For tragedy, the same seems to apply, *mutatis mutandis*. The titles leave the impression that its special preserve was the world of myth as an arena for engagement with universals rather than contemporary issues. Moschion's *Themistocles* shows that historical themes could be essayed, but a subject like Themistocles was for a Hellenistic audience more distant and "historical" in that sense. Moreover, contemporary historical events seem not to have been used as material for tragedy, and we can hardly expect to find in Hellenistic tragedy the political impact of Phrynichus' *Fall of Miletus* of probably 492 BC, for which the dramatist was fined for reminding the Athenians of their friends' misfortune (Herodotus 6.21).

The explosion in the publication of "books" is a well-known feature of the Hellenistic age. The image of the poet placing a writing-tablet on his knees for composing poetry in Callimachus' opening of the *Aetia* (fr.1. 21–22 Pfeiffer 1949; fr. 1. 21–22 Harder 2012) is generally taken as emblematic. The book, which was now so much more available and had become a cultural habit, divorces the material it contains from the earlier performative contexts and regions, an effect which the book shares with the new transportability and universality of drama. An extreme case in point is Lycophron's *Alexandra*, for which private reading is more likely than a symposiastic setting, since minds even slightly fuddled with wine might justifiably have grown impatient with it. It is an intellectual puzzle in the epitomizing style, being a messenger speech – a part of a tragedy – blown up into the size of a whole tragedy, and therefore a further example of Hellenistic experimentation. It is also a remarkable illustration of the new pan-Greek aesthetic in that it treats myths and history from all over the Greek-speaking lands, and does so in an undifferentiated manner, as opposed to the practice of the regional lyric and epics of the past (Hunter 2004b, 442). The same aesthetic can be seen in Callimachus' *Aetia*, with its aetiologies drawn from different parts of Greece, and also in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, which extends beyond Greece to non-Greek regions. Nor are such poems and approaches the sole preserve of the elite, because we have papyrus finds of such texts from quite remote areas of Egypt which belonged to people of quite modest means.[3] The cosmopolitan aesthetic was therefore general.

In this context we should finally note the rise of the "scholar-poet," the *poiētēs hama kai kritikos*, as Philetas of Cos was called (Strabo 14.2.19), though the mindset can be discerned throughout so much Hellenistic poetry, as is the case with Theocritus, Callimachus, and Apollonius of Rhodes.[4] We have already noticed the Hellenistic dramatists who were also literary and textual scholars, but the period's scholar-poets go one step further and actively use their scholarship on all the branches of Classical Greek poetry, not just drama, to

place their own poetry in relation to that of the hallowed past precisely in order to define the new poetry and create new effects. A famous example is the description of the shepherd's cup in Theocritus' first *Idyll*, lines 27–60. The description is marked as standing in the grand tradition of the Homeric shield of Achilles in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*, and the ps.-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*, but instead of a heroic provenance in the forge of Hephaestus, our cup was bought from a ferryman for a goat and a cheese (57–58). And, instead of the sublime world portrayed on the shields, we have three vignettes from lowly country life: a woman being wooed in vain by two men infatuated with her, a fisherman casting his net, and a boy who is supposed to be guarding a vineyard but is absorbed in plaiting a cricket-cage while two foxes pilfer the grapes. The ancestor of the description is thereby "cited," while the subject matter on the cup is deliberately brought down to earth, creating something new in ethos and tone.[5]

Poikilia

The use of the word as a technical term denoting "variety" is taken from the *Prolegomena* to the scholia on Theocritus (Wendel 1914 , 4.11–5.6), where it is used in connection with the literary "modes" (*charaktēres*), narrative, dramatic and a mixture, but it is equally applicable to the mixture (*krâsis*) of genres, like epic, tragedy, and comedy (Fantuzzi 2004, 18 and *passim*). It is another aesthetic principle by means of which Hellenistic literature and art strove for creativity and novelty in its relation to preceding ages. Together with the change of aesthetic experience fostered by the book and the dissociation of poetry from original performance contexts, the poetic genres may be "crossed," though in the performances of epic in traditional competitions generic expectations continue to be observed (Fantuzzi 2004, 21–22). Often, refinement of form and expression, like that of epic, is found in contrast with low subject matter, like that of comedy, a process which is part of *poikilia* (Zanker 1987, 133; 2004, 130–139, 144, 163–167). The everyday and low are admitted even into encomia. Theocritus' sixteenth *Idyll*, an appeal for the patronage of Hiero of Syracuse, demonstrates the power of poetry to immortalize by reference to the servants of the *Odyssey*, Eumaeus and the faithful Philoetius (48–57), and draws a vignette of the peaceful life of people in the country that he hopes will be restored under Hiero (90–97); it is highly plausible that Theocritus is advertising his preference in epic personnel. Callimachus at the beginning of Book Three of the *Aetia* (frr. 254–269 Lloyd-Jones and Parsons 1983; fr. 54–60j Harder 2012), written in elegiacs in honor of Queen Berenice's victory in the chariot race at the Nemean Games, describes the setting of a common mousetrap by Heracles' host, the old Molorchus: "For them he prepared a twofold killer" (fr. 259.32 Lloyd-Jones and Parsons 1983; fr. 54c.32 Harder 2012), where the word for "twofold," *dichthadious*, deliberately recalls the use of the same word to describe the

“twofold destinies” of the grand Achilles (*Il*. 9.411). To introduce such a theme into epinician poetry is already humorously ironical, but the citation of Homer in the low new setting puts the irony on to a second level.

For Hellenistic tragedy, the most important surviving text to illustrate the Hellenistic taste for variation is Lycophron’s *Alexandra*. Its 1474-line monologue comprises a single scene or messenger-speech rather than a whole drama, a *pars pro toto* which may be intentionally ironical, because the length of Cassandra’s speech is that of an actual, full tragedy. This sits easily within the Hellenistic experimentation with traditional literary forms. The versification is tightened to almost textbook strictness (Hunter 2004b, 435), a fact which strengthens the argument for regarding the *Alexandra* as *Buchpoesie*, as also seems to be the case with the tragedies ascribed to Callimachus, Timon, and Alexander the Aetolian (Hunter 2004b, 434–436).

The aesthetic of introducing the everyday into a traditional form is widespread in Hellenistic art as well. To take only one example, we have the Boy with a Goose from the Coan Asclepieion who is, while being a votive offering in a noble material and style and in an artistic genre of which greater themes were expected, nonetheless presented as an ordinary little boy, squashing his pet goose as he raises his right hand for the viewer to pick him up (Zanker 2004, 124–143; 2014). In this case, we have a verbal reaction to the group. In Herodas’ fourth *Mimiamb* (30–34) the two women, who are presented as actually viewing the piece in its original setting in the Asclepieion on the island of Cos, comment on the its lifelike effect, one of them exclaiming “… if it weren’t a stone in front of our feet, you’d say the sculpture’s about to speak,” and remarking that one day sculptors will make stone come alive. At least part of the girls’ shock at the work’s lifelike realism will have come from the unexpected “lowness” of its subject, theme, and form throwing one another into deeper relief. Behind the naivety lies a remarkable subtlety.

Leptotēs

Leptotēs, best translated in the Hellenistic context as “refinement,” was a hallmark of Hellenistic aesthetics in the ancient thought about Hellenistic literature and art. The idea of subtlety versus gravity of course goes back at least to the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, where Euripides is pejoratively said to be about to put Aeschylus’ subject matter and diction under minute and subtle analysis (*kataleptologēsei*, 828), and is made to say that he has put on a diet (*ischnana*, 941) the “swollen” (*oidousan*, 940) art as he has inherited it from Aeschylus. The stage was set for a dichotomy between fat and thin which was to play a significant role in Hellenistic poetic and rhetorical theory. Moreover, the quality takes on a positive connotation (Pfeiffer 1968 , 137–138). The adjective appears in the feminine (*leptē*) as an acrostic in Aratus’ *Phaenomena* (783–787). Callimachus uses it in a variant adjectival form

(*leptaleē*) in the Proem to his *Aetia* (fr. 1.24 Pfeiffer 1949; fr. 1.24 Harder 2012), where Apollo is said to have told the incipient poet to "keep the Muse slender"; he uses it again in his epigram hailing Aratus' "subtle discourses" (*leptai rhēsies*; 56.3 Gow and Page 1965), as does Leonidas of Tarentum (101.1 Gow and Page 1965). And Hedylus (5.2 Gow and Page 1965) uses it of poetry, and couples it with "honey-sweet," *melichros*. Just as important is the cultivation of "refinement," "sublety," and "slightness" found throughout Hellenistic poetry (Gutzwiller 2007, 32–35). This fastidiousness contributed to the "literary self-consciousness" of the poets, who were often scholars as well, as for example the scholar-poet Philetas at the very beginnings of Hellenistic poetry. The opposite of the quality is "fatness"; for example, Callimachus calls the *Lyde* of Antimachus "fat."[6] This kind of refinement is naturally best appreciated in an intimate performance context, and it is no surprise that the poetry illustrating it has clear associations with performances at court and with private reading. The Alexandrian poets under the patronage of the Ptolemies will have read most of their productions to a more or less exclusive audience at court.[7] Callimachus' fourth *Hymn* is probably a case in point, with its encomiastic elements including the unborn Apollo's exuterine prediction of Philadelphus' reign (165–190), and its presentation of the hymn as *literature* rather than to accompany a ritual (Bing 1988). This is of course a factor of the deracination of the poetic genres from their original public performance venues that we have already noted. Similarly, it is likely that, for example, Theocritus' *Idylls* and Herodas' *Mimiambs* were performed at court by one reciter, though other venues – like the symposium – would have been perfectly suitable; hence, partly, the love of formal refinement and brevity alongside comic, low subject matter, and the consequent play of tones made possible by the juxtaposition. A telling example of this is Theocritus' fourth *Idyll*, lines 50–56, in which the shepherd Battus exclaims to his colleague Corydon that he has trodden on a thorn, and Corydon pulls it out with his fingernails, upon which Battus remarks rather banally how small a wound can master a big man like him. The conversation is housed in hexameters, which were felt to be the most unlike the cadence of ordinary speech (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.8.4 1408b32–33). The subject matter is trivial, and yet the hexameter was perceived as the noblest of all the Greek meters (Aristotle, *Poetics* 59b34–35), and the shepherds are made to speak in a kind of Doric dialect which nobody spoke. The incongruities lend irony to the humour: Battus is himself made to refer to an analogous incongruity.

The quality and its aesthetic effects were also appreciated in visual art. We have explicit evidence of this from the new Posidippus papyrus. Epigram 62 (Austin and Bastianini 2002) attacks the sculptors who created *colossi*, and contrasts them with the productions of Lysippus, who is therefore being praised for the smaller scale of his statues, alongside the naturalism of his human forms admired by Pliny (*Natural History* 34.65). Epigram 67 (Austin and Bastianini 2002) celebrates the handiwork of Theodorus, who sculpted a

miniature chariot and charioteer in minutest detail, though the group could have been covered by the wings of a fly. In actual art the principle can be observed in such pieces as the Boy with a Goose, the Vatican countryside group of Pan pulling a thorn out of the foot of a satyr, and the Spinario.[8] Significantly, these three pieces have links with poems which would have been regarded as illustrations of literary *leptotēs*, Herodas' fourth *Mimiamb* (30–34), which, as we have already seen, refers to the piece in its setting of the Coan Asclepieion, and Theocritus' fourth *Idyll* (50–56) with its thorn-pulling scene.

The Hellenistic Baroque

Pollitt assigns to the Hellenistic Baroque the function of "conveying a sense of dramatic crisis" in portraiture, architectural sculpture like the Gigantomachy at Pergamon, and propagandistic pieces like the victory monuments of the Attalids; the sense is produced through ultra-massive, tension-filled bodies and pathetic facial expressions, exploring dramatic psychological states like fear and pain – features which peaked in Attalid sculpture (Pollitt 1986 , 7, 10, 78–126.)

Pollitt regards the term as really only applicable to sculpture (1986, 111), though Fowler (1989, 32–43) is surely right to point to passages in Apollonius and Theocritus describing figures like Amycus at *Argonautica* 2.1–97 and *Idyll* 22.43–52: Theocritus details his cauliflower ears, his broad chest and back which have a skin as hard as an iron statue's, his high-definition upper-arm muscles, and the lion-skin hanging down from his neck over his back from its paws. He is often compared with the Terme Boxer of fairly certainly the first century BC (see Figure 3.3). Otherwise, we have Heracles and the Nemean Lion in *Idyll* 25 (though this cannot securely be ascribed to Theocritus) and the *Argonautica*'s Heracles slaughtering giants (*Arg*. 1.993–995) and in dire distress over the loss of his lover, Hylas (*Arg*. 1.1268–1269). The truth is probably that Alexandria under the first three Ptolemies did not favour the Baroque style in its architecture or sculpture, and that any Baroque elements in its poetry are the result of subjects and themes like Heracles which are simply in common with Pergamene and Rhodian art, which we must remember is at least half a century later, and that in this area poetry preceded art.

On the other hand, Peter Schultz (2011) demonstrates that the Hellenistic Baroque's exaggerated musculature, swirling drapery, and pathos go back to the Classical period, and that there is a clear continuity, though an intensification in degree. And this is clear when one compares the drapery of the Nike of Samothrace with that of the Parthenon reclining Aphrodite, or the heavily muscled torso of Zeus in the Great Altar of Pergamon with that of the

Parthenon Poseidon. The same continuity and intensification can be witnessed in the descriptions of boxing matches and boxers by Theocritus and Apollonius: they set out to rival their Homeric counterparts in the brilliance of the visual detail in their accounts (Zanker 2004, 36–41). In the case of the Pergamene sculptures, of course, the aim is propagandistic: the Classical modes and models are cited and outdone by their astonishing impressiveness in order to claim at once their authentic heritage in Classical Greece and their superiority to it. Schultz has acutely defined the rhetorical and poetic principles of "*auxēsis* (amplification), *dilogia* (repetition), *megaloprepeia* (grandeur), *deinōsis* (intensity), *ekplēxis* (shock) and *enargeia* (vividness)" as "both aesthetic goals and the means by which these goals were achieved," and he has restated the view that the Baroque sculptors' principal agenda was *psychagōgia*, the swaying of the soul (Schultz 2011, 318; see the section on *psychagōgia* below). This aesthetic, which encompasses massive dimensions, contortion, and almost pathological pathos (as with the Suicidal Gaul; Figure 3.1), takes its roots in the self-promotion of the monarchs as the rightful heirs of Hellenic culture.

Realism

Both the literature and the visual arts of the Hellenistic period are profoundly concerned to bring their subject matter into striking connection with their audiences' and viewers' experience of life, frequently enlisting an appeal to the senses, especially sight. This is the aesthetic of realism, but it also involves what could be called the aesthetic of immediacy. It is a major source of the age's originality.

New Comedy led the way in this, with its apolitical presentation of young lovers, families and children, stock types like the golden-hearted hetaera, familiar settings and plots in which the ordinary life of ordinary citizens are momentarily interrupted by often quite improbable turns of events. The concomitant tone is bourgeois and by and large unchallenging. Menander is the prime example of this, and the famous question about him by Aristophanes of Byzantium whether Menander imitated life or vice versa only expresses in a striking way what every audience or reader has felt (Hunter 2004b , 430–431). His enormous popularity is demonstrated by the frequency of papyrus-finds in Egypt of his works, both in Alexandria and in the *chora* (Hunter 2004b, 405), and the illustrations of the plays in mosaics and wall paintings in people's houses testify to the same phenomenon.[9] Clearly, people felt that he had struck a chord.

But this realism is an aesthetic which permeates all literary genres and artistic media in the age. It is present in all performance contexts, from the theater stage (though we know nothing about tragedy in this respect), to the symposium, and to the book; subliterary performances of course included low

subject matter *ex hypothesi*, and we have enough evidence to show that it did in reality (Esposito 2005, 22–25, 41–47, 51–57). And the aesthetic of realism is abundantly represented in sculpture and painting. For explicit evidence we have Praxinoa's praise of the tapestries at Arsinoe's staging of the Adonis festival: "Lady Athena, what wool-workers have made them, and what artists have drawn the lines so accurately! How true to life they stand and turn – they're alive, not woven!" (*Id*. 15.80–83). Commenting on Apelles, Kynno in Herodas' fourth *Mimiamb* mentions his "true hands … in all his lines" (*Mim*. 4.72–73), by "true hands" referring to the technical term in Hellenistic art criticism for pictorial accuracy, "truth" (*alētheia*). Apollonius in his description of the last scene on Jason's cloak remarks how truly the ram seems to be speaking to Phrixus, and how the viewer would be deceived into waiting to hear his words (*Arg*. 1.763–767). In epigram, of course, the praise of the lifelike quality in art is a pervasive topic: Posidippus 63 (Austin and Bastianini 2002), to take only one example, celebrates Hecataeus' bronze statue of Philetas and its accurate representation of the poet, without any heroic traits, looking as if he is about to speak, with character, and giving the impression that it is alive.[10] And in the practice of Hellenistic art likeness to life is a novel and standard feature, as in the statues and groups on rustic themes and scenes, the Conservatori Old Shepherdess (or Shepherd), the Terme Boxer (Figure 3.3), or the Munich Glyptothek Drunken Old Woman (Figure 3.2; Pollitt 1986, 141–147).

Figure 3.2 The Drunken Old Woman in Munich.

Photographs and photo montage by H.R. Goette.

In both literature and art the emphasis on the realistic and immediate gave rise

to an enormous tonal range, from the comic to the ironic to the serious, and all points in between. This is brought about in large part by the crossing of the genres that we have already met. Moreover, enabling the audiences of the non-dramatic genres to create a vividly visual picture of material from everyday (and lower) experience is a procedure which contributes significantly to the aesthetic of immediacy. It is of course true that all ancient art strives to relate to its audiences and viewers' experience in some way or another, but the Hellenistic aesthetic went further in this respect than any of its predecessors. As so often when dealing with Hellenistic aesthetics, it's a matter of degree.

The lifelike quality is observable in dramatic performance other than in the theater. We see it in the literary mimes of Theocritus and Herodas. In Theocritus the *Idylls* are both country and urban. The country poems present shepherds, goatherds, and reapers passing the time of day, singing to one another, pulling thorns out of one another's feet, abusing one another, and above all in love, which even happens in the poems depicting the pre-Odyssean Polyphemus. The urban mimes feature a young woman resorting to witchcraft to bring back her opportunistic lover, a jilted lover telling his crony about the disastrous symposium at which he learnt the doleful truth, and two ordinary housewives visiting Queen Arsinoe's show for the Adonis festival in Alexandria. And yet in both cases the characters are presented as speaking and singing in hexameters, which, as we have seen, had served far higher purposes and was considered to be quite unlike ordinary speech in cadence, and in a literary Doric which nobody spoke. The tensions between high form and everyday or low subject matter are well known: they create a comic effect when the rift is large, and are capable of some seriousness when form and material come together, as with the song of Daphnis who, Hippolytus-like, resists Aphrodite to the death (61–141). The hexameter has been removed from its province of epic and its performance context, and has been "crossed" with the material of comedy, by a process which we have already noticed. The context is now more private: in particular, the symposium.

Herodas' *Mimiambs* present interesting analogies and differences. Their subjects are decidedly "low" figures: a bawd, an outrageous pimp acting as an orator in front of a jury, a mother preoccupied with a recalcitrant son and his sadistic teacher, two chatterboxes visiting the Asclepieion on Cos and commenting on the art displayed there, a jealous mistress in a show-down with a slave who has transferred his sexual favours, two women admiring a dildo, the same two women visiting a shoemaker who stitches dildoes on the side, and the poet himself relating a dream and interpreting it as a confirmation of his poetry. Yet again we find a crossing of genres, but this time it is the presentation of low subjects in a dramatic mode, though in the iambic metre and Ionic dialect of invective poetry. And again, the *Mimiambs* are likely to have had the symposium as a performance setting, which could

have included court symposia, as is also the case with some of Theocritus' poems. Even if, as I have argued, Herodas' *Mimiambs* were in fact recited by one gifted actor (Zanker 2009, esp. 4–6), the visual elements of staging and stage movements could have emerged from the recited text without difficulty, and the same could be argued for Theocritus' second, fourteenth, and fifteenth *Idylls*. In that case, the dramatic element was indeed being catered for in poetic texts of high literary merit. The *Kleinform* was certainly suited to a sympotic performance context.

Mime theater figured at all levels of the symposium, at least in Hellenistic Egypt, and, despite the humble status of the genre, its presence at symposia is further proof of the general popularity of the aesthetic of the immediate and lifelike. It also shows the Hellenistic penchant for less intellectually demanding drama, however "literary" Theocritus and Herodas' mimes may be (Fraser 2003). Moreover, the quality of Hellenistic mime is remarkably high. In an important paper Hunter argues that, while the elite of the period favoured New Comedy and especially Menander as "their" proper entertainment and characterized mime as vulgar in order to establish their superiority to the lower classes, the boundaries between the two genres in terms of quality are often "very hard to find" (Hunter 2002).

Among the non-dramatic genres, the amatory epigram, which appears to have made its debut in Hellenistic symposia, sheds valuable light on the period's aesthetic of realism and immediacy. The scholar who has argued most recently and forcefully for a symposium setting for these poems is Alan Cameron.[11] We need only assume the genesis of the poems in a symposium context: the poets could well have polished their improvisations afterwards for publication in a book. And it is certainly true that some epigrams were written for books. The aesthetic that emerges from a reading of this type of poetry is a taste for the representation of private and personal emotion in the briefest and most arresting compass. Consider only Asclepiades 18 (Gow and Page 1965): "Wine is a test of love: though he kept denying to us that he was in love, / Nicagoras' many toasts revealed the truth. / For he cried and hung his head and had a very downcast look, / and the garland bound to him did not remain on his head" (tr. Sens 2011, 119). Such poems seem the very opposite of the spectacle provided by other Hellenistic hosts, but their impact is subtly powerful.

More elevated forms of Hellenistic poetry also show the trend. An epic of traditional length like the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes could present the theme of love in a manner unprecedented in the genre as we know it, most obviously in the third book depicting Medea's awakening passion for Jason, though love plays a part in all books of the epic, with the love of Jason and Hypsipyle in the first, the statement of Phineus in the second to the Argonauts that the aid of Aphrodite is to be essential to the success of their heroic venture (*Arg*. 2.423–424), and the incipient disintegration of the couple's

relationship in Book Four. The experience of love is universally shared, and its incorporation into an epic may be seen as a means of making heroic poetry immediate and in a sense realistic to its audiences. Even more extreme is Callimachus' foregrounding of a descendant of Eumaeus and Eurycleia in his miniature epic of around a thousand lines, the *Hecale* (Hollis 1990, 337–340). The eponymous heroine's straitened circumstances in the country and her spontaneous generosity in entertaining the young Theseus the night before his heroic conquest of the Bull of Marathon are accorded minute description and a celebration unprecedented in previous epic. The innovation is one in which genre-crossing is again instrumental, with the material of comedy presented in a grand genre like epic, and with a harmony of form and subject which is this time the opposite of deflatory: low subject matter is now presented as as equally noble as the heroic (Zanker 1987, 209–214).

Moreover, an analogous strategy is found in the visual art of the period (Zanker 2014). The everyday and the low (and worse) are given a prominence that is as unprecedented in Greek art as it is in poetry, often in noble materials and in the noble style. Indeed, the poet Herodas seems to use the realistic art of Apelles as a statement of his own poetic program when he makes the women of his fourth *Mimiamb* praise the painter's paintings of humble subject matter in the temple of the Coan Asclepieion (59–78; Zanker 2009, 128–129). We have already seen examples in sculpture, including the Spinario, a young country boy who is pulling a thorn from his foot, the Munich Drunken Old Woman (Figure 3.2), whose emaciation and disarray provoke a sense of pathos and act, for the Hellenistic viewer, as a reminder that a downturn in one's circumstances is always possible (Zanker 2004, 155–158), and the Suicidal Gaul group (Figure 3.1), which is potent in its depiction of pain: although the male is presented as heroic in his defiance in defeat, there is real pity in the figure of his dying wife as he holds her up. In her, at least, the visible suffering of a human being on the periphery of the heroic life is potently magnified by the noble material and style in which she is rendered (Zanker 2004, 153–155). A particularly telling final example is the bronze Terme Boxer (Figure 3.3), dated, as we have seen, probably to the first century BC. He is conceived in the tradition of the athlete statues of the Classical period with all their idealization, and yet what the viewer is presented with is a boxer who is in a state of post-bout exhaustion, seated, his wounds still dripping blood (marked on the bronze by copper inlay), his face seriously cut, and his body slumping forward slightly. Original viewers confronted by the figure, who looks up to the viewer as if addressing him, would have known of the noble tradition in which the Boxer stands, and would have appreciated the value of the material from which he is forged and the lavish skill with which he is so realistically presented; and they would have been shocked to see all this expended on the image of an athlete in such a state, however courageously defiant he still appears to be. The Boxer is a superb instance in visual art of what is called in literary scholarship

“opposition in imitation.”

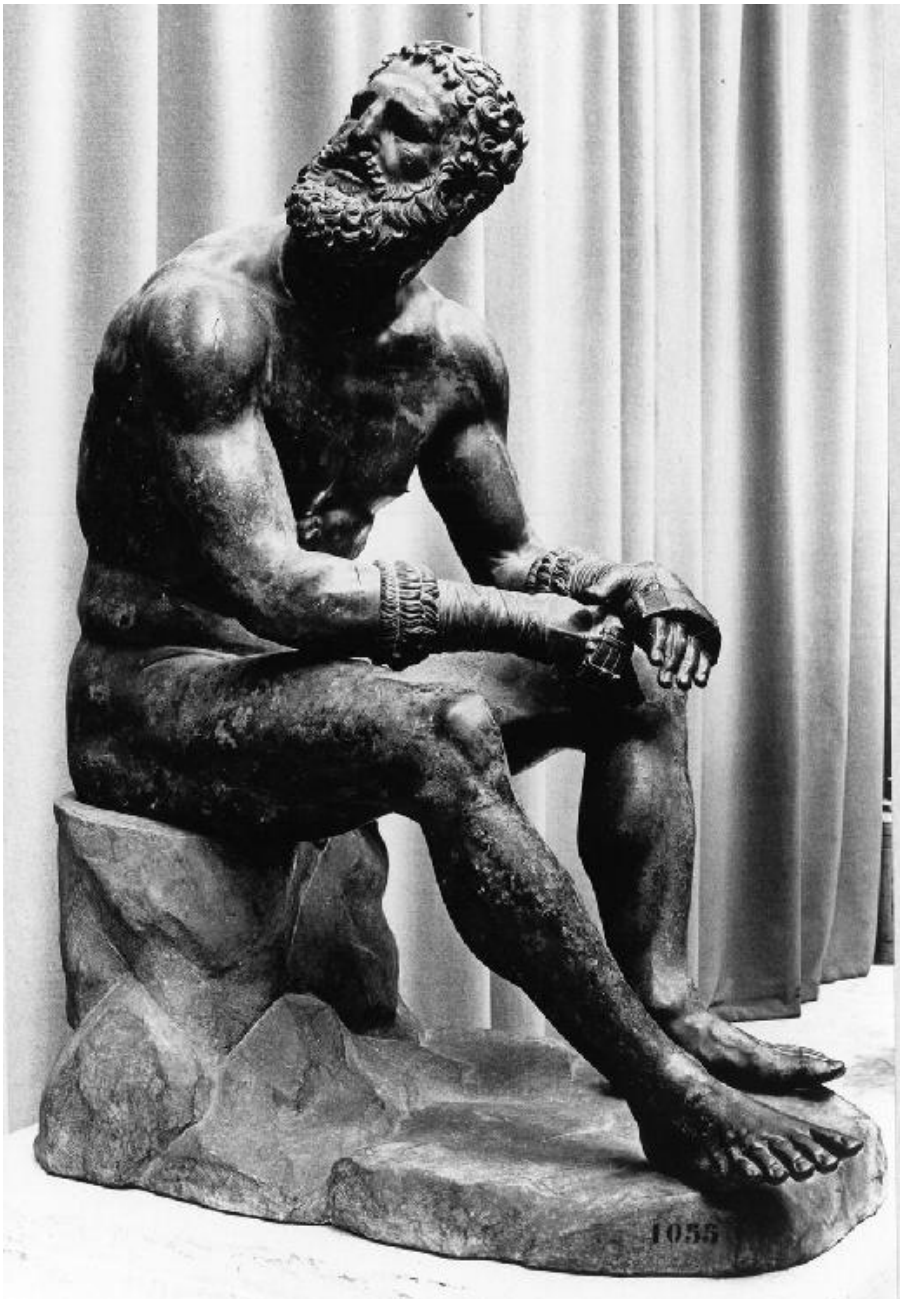

Figure 3.3 Terme Boxer. Museo Nazionale Romano (Terme), Rome. Koppermann, DAI negative number 66.1689.

Reader/Viewer Activity: Integration and

Supplementation

Another aspect of the immediacy principle is the poetic and artistic practice of including the reader or viewer in the narrative or the picture. In poetry, we have as fascinating examples the mimetic hymns of Callimachus. These poems do not accompany but re-present public cult festivals like the Bath of Pallas in Argos, following the lead of the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* 146–164, where the festivities of the Ionians and their wives in honour of Apollo on Delos are described so graphically. They are most likely to have been presented in a royal private setting, and the ceremonies are thus divorced from their original performance context (Zanker 2004 , 33, 115–118). The indirectness called for powers of vivid visualization, *enargeia*, so that the audience can gain the most intimate impression possible of "being there," and this is supplied by the Master of Ceremonies' commentary on the proceedings as he (or she in the case of *Hymns* 5 and 6) "leads" and witnesses them. This permits the introduction of features like a creaking axle and horses neighing on cue (mentioned by the celebrant), which would have been improbable in an actual participatory hymn. Again, the Hellenistic audience is one of "onlookers," except that they are not even directly observing. Yet they are simultaneously included – or "integrated" – in the scene. The poems might have also been designed for – and are effective as – private reading, in which case the reader could have experienced the excitement of a festival "at home".

In all three of these pieces the Master of Ceremonies addresses the participants, but the address is initially unspecified, with the effect that the readers or audience of the poems feel as if they are being personally addressed. The most impressive instance of the procedure is the beginning of the *Hymn to Apollo* (*H*. 2.1–8):

> How the laurel sapling of Apollo has shaken, how has the whole hall! Stand back, stand back, whoever is a sinner! Phoebus is just now striking the doors with his fair foot. – Don't you see? The Delian palm-tree has suddenly given a sweet nod, and the swan sings beautifully in the sky. Draw back of your own accord, you gate-bolts; of your own accord, you bars: the god is no longer distant. And you young men, prepare the singing and the dance.[12]

The commands that sinners stand back and the interjected "Don't you see?" put the audience *in* the picture.

The classic example in art of involving the viewer is the way in which Praxiteles' Cnidian Aphrodite stares in rebuke at the viewer as she tries to hide her genitals from him, the viewer having intruded on her at the intimate moment of bathing.[13] The Cnidia is, of course, a late Classical work, but the Hellenistic sculptors took up the effect in a way that became one of their major signatures, as has been systematically explored in recent scholarship.[14]

A descendant of the Cnidia, the Crouching Aphrodite (Figure 3.4) goes even further than the Cnidia. Careful reconstruction of the figure shows that the goddess has been surprised by the viewer while bathing, and that she reacts to the intrusion by bringing her thighs together, reaching across her body with the spread fingers of her left hand, defensively lowering her right shoulder and reaching across her body with her right arm to cover her breasts, only to give her right breast even more prominence in between the framing right forearm and torso and her left thigh.[15] She therefore reacts to the viewer's presence even more expressively than the Cnidia, and the distance between the statue and the spectator is lessened even further. Another example of the phenomenon is found in the Munich Drunken Old Woman (Figure 3.2). She must have been displayed on a low base at ground level while she herself has taken to sitting on the ground as the safest place to be in her condition, so that the viewer can look down on her and her haggard face with its missing teeth. In this position the old woman addresses the viewer, perhaps even inviting him to drink her wine from the flask she cradles so carefully.[16] Of quite different ethos but illustrating the same motif is the statue of the Stoic philosopher, Chrysippus (Figure 3.5). He is seated, but his upper body is leaning intently forward, and his eyebrows are raised in animation. His mouth is open, and addressing the observer. His left arm is restrictingly held by the folds of his cloak, in contrast with his right arm, which is outstretched toward the viewer; it is plausibly argued that his right hand was extended palm upwards, which would have again been a gesture directed toward the viewer. In the process, the viewer is turned into an interlocutor with an intense and enthusiastic intellectual.[17] These are only three examples of Hellenistic sculpture in which the distance between the viewer and the work of art is reduced to the atomic minimum.[18]

Figure 3.4 Crouching Aphrodite. Museo Nazionale Romano (Terme), Rome. Koppermann, DAI negative number 66.1682.

Figure 3.5 Chrysippus: Reconstruction of the statue of Chrysippus, a combination of the portrait head in Naples, MAN 6127 from the Farnese collection and a headless statue in Paris, Louvre MA 80.

Photographs and photo montage by H.R. Goette.

The final major procedure by which poetry and art were made to involve readers and viewers was the demand that they fill out the full picture of a scene by following up embedded visual clues (Zanker 2004, 72–102). This is illustrated fascinatingly by the possibly non-Theocritean *Idyll* 25, *Heracles the Lion-Slayer* (Zanker 2004, 89–97). This miniature epic presents the story of Heracles and the Nemean Lion in the form of a narrative by Heracles addressed to the son of King Augeas, Phyleus, who has gone into exile with Heracles after the hero has cleaned the king's immense stables. The actual cleaning of the stables is omitted, but the enormity of the task can be clearly visualized by the audience from clues in the inspection of the king's massive estate, like Heracles' perturbed astonishment at the size of the herds (*Id*. 25.112–115). As a result, attentive readers can fill in the untold narrative.

The analogies in art are striking. For example, we have the Girl of Antium, a sole figure depicting a young priestess examining her sacrificial implements, from whom we can imagine a whole sacrificial context; indeed, it has even been suggested that she was originally displayed in a sanctuary, and that visitors would have been been led on to view her as if she were really in the act of (eternally) sacrificing to the deity of the precinct, thus demonstrating the piety of the person who commissioned the work (Kunze 2002, 46–47). In the Telephus sequence on the Pergamon Altar there is the single scene of Augē looking on as shipwrights build the boat in which she and Telephus are to be exposed; the moment stands for the whole of her terrifying journey, but it is perfectly sufficient to conjure up the suffering in store. For a final example, take the Winged Victory of Samothrace, just as she lands on her right foot on the prow of a ship; the single moment breathlessly proclaims that there has been a great sea battle, and that a great victory has been won; the swirling, twisting drapery reinforces the sense of urgency and excitement.[19]

Reader/Viewer Passivity

The aesthetic of realism and immediacy can also be found in a way paradoxically the opposite of integrating the audience. This is the process of filling in all the details of a scene so that the audience can view it entirely in their mind's eye, becoming more of a *passive* viewer.

Theocritus' fifteenth *Idyll* with its hymn to Adonis is a revealing document in this connection. The singer is introduced by Gorgo as "a clever singer" (*polyidris aoidos*, 97), who apparently won a dirge-singing contest (*ton ialemon aristeuse*, 98) the year before; her singing is enthusiastically received, with Gorgo again commenting on how knowledgeable she is (145–146). She is therefore presented as a professional performer of some prowess, a suitable candidate for a performance of a lament for Adonis in Arsinoe's palace. She begins with an address to Aphrodite which explains the occasion for the ceremony: Aphrodite gave immortality to Arsinoe's mother, Berenice, and

Arsinoe is thanking Aphrodite by staging the ritual (100–110). She therefore performs an encomiastic role. Her description of the tableau of Adonis in Aphrodite's arms, and of the lamentation of the women who will consign him to the sea on the next day (112–135), functions on at least two levels. For the characters within the poem, the descriptive element of the hymn details what they have come "to see" (*thasomenai*, 23), and forms a counterpart and supplement to their own act of seeing when they briefly admire the tapestries and the tableau (78–86). For the receptors of the poem, that same strategy applies: having had the tantalizing hint of the scene from Praxinoa, their interest is gratified by the singer's description. But for both groups the cardinal feature is the spectacle. Apart from their enthusiastic responses to the sight of the tableau and to the artistry of both artist and singer, moreover, Gorgo and Praxinoa are passive onlookers. Here, therefore, we have further evidence, this time from a literary source, of the Hellenistic aesthetic of looking on, as if the audience were transformed into immediate witnesses, rather than being treated as integrated participants in a cult ritual, as would have been the expectation in a Classical context. In terms of its actual performance context, the hymn is closely comparable in its evocation of a ritual with the "mimetic hymns" of Callimachus (even if the strategies are different), and is therefore unlikely to have been performed as a part of an actual rite. The real lesson for us is the way it illustrates the taste for passive onlooking, whether for the original Hellenistic audience (however the mime was performed), or for Theocritus' private readers, or for ancient festival goers.[20]

Spectacle

The Hellenistic symposium, despite the little information about it that has come down to us in contrast with what we know of the earlier symposium,[21] offers interesting perspectives on the aesthetic of immediacy, taking the extra step of introducing the strikingly dramatic, or the phenomenon of *hyper*reality. The first new element concerns theatricality, since this became much more prominent in the symposium of Hellenistic times, giving rise to what has been called "dinner theatre" (Jones 1991). Of course, Classical and probably earlier symposia featured visual and theatrical entertainment, as we know from Xenophon's *Symposium*, which claims to report the symposium entertainment put on by Callias in 422 BC. After the performances by the female flute player, the dancing girl who can perform tricks, and the handsome boy cithara player and dancer, we have Socrates' comment that Callias has provided "the most agreeable treats for the eye and the ear" (2.2); and there is the concluding mime of Ariadne and Dionysus which had such an erotic impact on the viewers that they had to seek immediate sexual relief with their wives or lovers after they had left (9.7). However, Athenaeus preserves a letter describing a wedding dinner staged by a wealthy

Macedonian in the early Hellenistic period named Caranus (*Scholars at Dinner* 4.128c–130d). It demonstrates the upper parameters. Quite apart from the staggeringly lavish food and gifts he gave his 20 guests, Caranus staged performances by an orchestra of female flautists, singers, and players of the *sambuca* harp (which had associations of indecency), all of whom appeared naked to the letter writer, Hippolochus. Also featured were a chorus of performers from the Athenian Festival of Pots, ithyphallic dancers, naked female acrobats, and fire-eaters, another chorus of one hundred men singing the wedding song, dancing girls, some dressed as Nereids and others as nymphs, Erotes, Artemises, Pans, Hermeses and the like, and the distinguished clown Mandrogenes, who danced with his 80-year-old wife. As Christopher Jones remarks, the letter's description of Caranus' entertainment "beggars Encolpius' account of Trimalchio" (Jones 1991, 191). If the wedding feast is anything to go by, the Hellenistic symposium evidently could also have been staged with elements of a "show," drastically reducing the ritual's traditional participatory character to one of onlooking, this time viewing spectacular displays of entertainment put on by a host.

Alexander the Great took the lead in the Hellenistic regents' creation of festivals and theatrical performances with the processions, shows, and dithyrambic and tragic contests which he staged even on campaign. These included the competitions that he set up in Phoenicia after his return from Egypt in 331 BC, with star actors like Thessalus, whom he much admired.[22] These festivals naturally came also to be transferred from open-air venues to more intimate settings like the regents' palaces, as with the *Adonia* of Theocritus' fifteenth *Idyll*, where, as we have seen, the emphasis is on passive viewing.

Civic and religious festivals accompanying the dramatic and musical contests became staged spectacles designed to entertain and impress the viewers. The extravagance of Ptolemy Philadelphus' *Pompē* of between 270 and 260 BC, which was an integral part of a festival, with musical contests including the performance of dithyramb (Rice 1983, 26–27, 57–58), demonstrates the lengths to which the Hellenistic monarchs could go. The mechanical float depicting a 3-meter-tall Nysa, by mechanical means automatically standing, pouring a libation of milk and then sitting down again, is only one part of the procession to give an idea of the wholescale emphasis the regents put on the dazzlingly spectacular. Nor was Philadelphus the only political leader to employ such gadgets: comparable in terms of context is the self-propelling snail of Demetrius the Besieger, which appeared at the Dionysia staged by him at Athens in 309/8 BC.[23]

Epigraphic evidence in the form of decrees honoring the organizers of successful festivals emphasize the visual beauty and order expected of festivals, telling us the same story as our literary sources, like Theocritus' fifteenth *Idyll*. The greater distance between performer and spectator is also

illustrated by Philadelphus' procession: professional actors and musicians were used to act the part of the active participants like satyrs and Sileni (Chaniotis 1997, 242) and in some Hellenistic festivals barriers separated the two groups and mercenary troops replaced the parades of citizens (Chaniotis 1997, 247). This again had the effect of turning the people watching festivals into passive onlookers, and the festivals turning from participatory religious experiences into objects of aesthetic delight. No doubt, moreover, Angelos Chaniotis in his rich and fascinating study is right to see the widening of the gap between protagonists of public life and the common people as fostering the aesthetic rift between performer and receptor (Chaniotis 1997, 252–254).

While the gap between spectacle and spectator was thereby widened, in an important way the Hellenistic rulers fostered another striking new aspect of the Greek experience and aesthetic framing of political life. This is the view of life as a stage. The "theatrical mentality" of the Hellenistic period is the subject of Chaniotis' seminal essay.[24] Chaniotis defines this "theatricality" as the construction of an image which to some extent involves deception through opposition to reality, exaggeration, or distortion in order to gain control over the emotions and thinking of others, and this can be brought about by either verbal or non-verbal communication (1997, 222.) He observes this phenomenon in many areas of public life. The newly built theaters are made to house not only dramatic festivals, but also lectures, concerts, the assembly, the announcements of the kings' honors, political trials, and even executions, all of which encouraged the expectation that political life should be "dramatized" (1997, 224–225).

This is brought out in a very graphic way by the importance now accorded to delivery and costume in the speeches and self-presentation of the prime movers in public life, who are now increasingly regarded – and sometimes derided – as actors. A figure embodying many of these trends is Demetrius the Besieger. He had an all-purpose costume wardrobe which Plutarch was to describe, introducing his description by saying that there was "much of the tragic / dramatic" (*tragoidia megalē*) in the person of Demetrius, and concluding it by mentioning the famous cloak depicting the world and the heavenly bodies (*Demetr*. 41). His entry into Athens after he had captured it in 294 BC involved his ordering the citizens to assemble in the theater, which he himself entered through an upper side entrance – in Plutarch's words, "like the tragic actors" – heightening the tension and dramatic effect (*Demetr*. 34; Chaniotis 1997, 238–239). He "imitated" Dionysus, donning a Dionysiac costume, the ivy wreath, and *thyrsos*, and getting actors to play the role of his ithyphallic retinue (Chaniotis 1997, 241 n.109.); Demetrius' assimilation into ruler-as-actor is a pervasive theme of Plutarch's *Life*.

Psychagōgia

We come, finally, to an aesthetic principle of Hellenism which lies at the root of all the individual aspects of the period's aesthetics as we have examined them so far. This is *psychagōgia*, "the leading of the soul," connoting pure "entertainment." The concept is most famously represented by the early Alexandrian scientist and occasional poet, Eratosthenes, who is recorded as stating that "every poet aims at entertainment, not instruction [*didaskalia*]" (Strabo 1.1.10, 1.2.3). The statement is anti-Platonic and anti-Stoic.[25] Whatever the positions the different philosophical schools adopted on whether literature or art should delight or instruct, *psychagōgia* was the dominant aesthetic in the practice of the poets and artists. It freed poetry, and by implication all art, from the role, traditionally assigned to it, of teaching morality, politics, oratory, history, and geography.[26] We have repeatedly seen the principle at work, first in the conversion of the Classical to an "idea," liberating it from its original civic and morally didactic potency; second, in the aesthetic play of variation, whereby new material could be presented in the traditional poetic and artistic forms; third, in the prominence accorded to subtlety, where lowly, even domestic material was presented in refined diction and poetic and artistic forms; fourth, in the opposing aesthetic of the Baroque, with all its sweep and energy; and finally, in the cult of the lifelike quality and immediacy, by means of which audiences and viewers could be almost physically drawn into the world of poetry and art, made to feel in its presence through being transformed into eyewitnesses, or by being caught up in visual, even theatrical spectacle. Nietzsche's conception in the eighteenth chapter of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* of the Hellenistic aesthetic as that of an outright "theoretischer Mensch" is a drastic overstatement (Nietzsche 1972, 111–116).

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FURTHER READING

Up until quite recently, comparisons of Hellenistic poetry and visual art centered on establishing which poet was influenced by which piece of art (and sometimes vice versa), the study of Webster (1964) being one of the latest cases in point. Fowler (1989) was among the first to try to see aesthetic communalities in the two media, but her desire for comprehensivity led her to some very free associations; her list is useful, but she tends to paraphrase or illustrate what are in fact comparable characteristics, rather than try to establish the meaning of the subject of her title, *The Hellenistic Aesthetic*. In the last decade scholars like Kunze (2002), Zanker (2004), and Prioux (2007) have paid attention to the relationships between the work of art or literature and the recipient, in particular to how the recipient is placed spatially in the work of art's world. In line with the aim of the current section of this volume, my own essay has tried to represent at least some of these findings, and to point where possible to the relationship of the performance context and the aesthetic effect this is likely to have had on the creation of the different forms of art. A more theoretical approach has been introduced by Gutzwiller (2010), who, while offering an account of Hellenistic literary and art criticism, simultaneously sheds helpful light on several issues in the Hellenistic aesthetic, notably the dichotomy between *psychagōgia* and *didaskalia*, the rise of the euphonist critics, and allegory. Gibson (2005) performs a parallel service for the Hellenistic criticism of music.

The question of performance context in poetry, and therefore of an important aspect of aesthetics, is complicated by the debate over the extent to which poets in the Hellenistic age wrote for book reception. The parameters of the debate are represented by Cameron (1995), who argues for a continuing oral mode of performance, and by Bing (1988; 2009, 106–115), who argues that the primary mode of experiencing poetry was now through books. It seems likely that in many cases poetry was composed for both fora.

On the matter of how the Hellenistic aesthetic was informed by public shows, see Chaniotis (1997), who examines literary sources, inscriptions, and images to study the theatrical behavior of statesmen and kings in the Hellenistic period (*c*.330–30 BC), the perception of political life as a staged drama, and the influence of theatrical performances on political oratory and public rituals.

NOTES

1 Zanker (2004 , 153–155); for the group's ethnological realism see Stewart (1990, 206–207).

2 Lightfoot (2002); Aneziri (2003; 2007, 81 n.64; 2009); Le Guen (2001, 9–11 with n.25).

3 See for example the Firmin-Didot papyrus, discussed by Thompson (1987).

4 Pfeiffer (1968, 8–92, 123–170); Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004, 23–26, 43–44, 123, 373–374, 434, 444–461).

5 Indeed, Radke (2007) argues that the Hellenistic poets' fascination with depicting children, especially the gods as children (like Heracles in Theocritus, *Id*. 24), is a conscious strategy by which the poets signaled that they were the metaphorical predecessors of the poetry of the Archaic and Classical ages, when the children had grown up; on this means of separating the Hellenistic age's poetry from that of the earlier periods, see Zanker (2010).

6 *pachu*, 62 Gow and Page (1965); Cameron (1995, 303–338) for rich documentation and discussion; cf. Porter (2011, 276).

7 See most recently Acosta-Hughes (2012). For a detailed prosopography of the courtly audiences at Alexandria see Weber (1993, 130–154).

8 See Pollitt (1986, 127–149).

9 For the material evidence reflecting theater, see Webster (1995 vol. 1, 85–98); Nervegna (2013).

10 For further examples see Zanker (2004, 66–69); see also the series on Myron's Cow in the *Palatine Anthology*, 9.713–742.

11 Cameron (1995, 71–103); *contra*, Sens (2011, xxxvii).

12 See also *H*. 5, 1–4, 6.1–9.

13 Stewart (1997, 102–105); Zanker (2004, 42–44); Stewart (2014, 177–80).

14 Kunze (2002); Zanker (2004); Stewart (2014, 180–85).

15 This is the reconstruction by Kunze (2002, 1008–125; cf. Stewart (2014, 183–84).

16 Kunze (2002, 99–106); Zanker (2004, 155–158).

17 Kunze (2002, 63–69).

18 For further examples, like the Farnese Bull group, the Boy with a Goose, the Hellenistic fishermen statues, and the Ludovisi Gaul, see Kunze (2002) and Zanker (2004).

19 Schultz (2011); Zanker (2004, 72–102).

20 For many examples of descriptive writing in Hellenistic poetry see Zanker (1987, 55–112; 2004, 27–71).

21 Though see Olsen and Sens (1999, 24–29).

22 Plut. *Alex*. 29.1–6, 4.6; see in general Weber (1993, 48–51); Cameron (1995, 71–76).

23 Polybius 12.13.11; see Rice (1983, 62–65) for further examples.

24 Chaniotis (1997); the phrase is Pollitt's (1986, 4).

25 See Pfeiffer 1968 (166–168), Gutzwiller (2010) for the opposition.

26 Similarly, Aristoxenus of Tarentum was the first to treat musicology as independent of its traditional mathematical, educational, and aesthetic functions; hence music could now be analyzed and enjoyed for its intrinsic beauty: Gibson (2005).

CHAPTER 4
Poetry, Patronage, and Roman Politics

Thomas Habinek

Relations between poets, artists, and their patrons at Rome must be understood in terms of the broader array of social relations in which they were embedded. Even the vocabulary used by Latin writers to describe interactions with leading individuals and households overlaps with the terminology that expresses more wide-ranging practices of exchange, honor, friendship, and deference. Poets speak of themselves and their sponsors as friends (*amici*) who provide each other gifts (*munera*) and kindnesses (*beneficia*), exchanging honor (*honor*, *gloria*, *fama*) for protection (*praeses*) and support (*auxilium*) in fulfillment of obligations (*officia*) and requests (*iussa*). As such practices and the social structures that sustained them varied over time, so too did the position of the writer or artist. Thus this chapter will consider the topic of patronage at Rome in terms of the historical evolution of literary and, to a lesser extent, artistic production. What was the social status of writers and artists, and in what ways did they depend upon the material support of others? How did an evolving system of patronage affect authors' aesthetic choices, as reflected in style, genre, and theme? And in turn, how did the development of a Classical aesthetic contribute to social and cultural cohesion across the vast range of time and space known as "ancient Rome"?

Public and Private Literary Activity in Regal and Republican Rome

In the earliest phase of its history, Rome emerged as a distinct community within a network of city-states in central Italy. As such, it was subject to influence from neighboring Etruscan and Latin communities, a number of which were well integrated into the wider Mediterranean world (Cornell 1995; Smith 1996; Terrenato 2006). Already during the so-called regal period (753–509 BC) there is evidence of the circulation of precious objects among the elites of Latium and of the construction of palaces, temples, and other monuments, presumably financed by local potentates. Among the legends concerning early Rome is the story that the family of the Tarquins (the last three kings of Rome) originated in Corinth and emigrated, together with a company of artisans, from Etruria (Livy 1.34; Pliny *HN* 35.152; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.46). While the particulars of such legends are always open to doubt, ample evidence suggests that the rule of the Tarquins resembled that of roughly contemporary tyrants in the Greek-speaking communities of Samos, Athens, Corinth, and perhaps especially Syracuse in Sicily.

Like the Greek tyrants, the rulers of central Italy built richly decorated palaces (e.g. the recent discovery at Gabii, near Rome; Lorenzi 2010) and temples (e.g. San Omobono complex), and it is reasonable to suppose that, like their Greek counterparts, they supported poetic or musical activity as well (Habinek 2005, 34–44). Later Roman sources retroject a musical culture into the distant past, but represent it as the activity chiefly of elite performers rather than paid professionals (Cic. *Tusc*. 4.3; Zorzetti 1991). This tendency to insist on the autonomous status of poets and singers while acknowledging the social and economic dependency of other artisans is a persistent feature of Roman writers' self-representation, which nonetheless should be viewed with caution. The Greek poet Pindar, who celebrated the tyrants Hieron of Syracuse and Theron of Akragas, received pay for his compositions yet still spoke of himself as engaged in a version of aristocratic gift exchange with his patrons (Kurke 1991; Thomas 1995). Early Latin poets, like some of their successors, may have represented their situation in similarly optimistic or self-serving terms. At the same time, traditional prayers, grouped by the Romans with later poetry under the rubric *carmen* or song, survived probably thanks to the corporate responsibility of elite priesthoods (Habinek 2005, 8–33).

By the time we have explicit evidence concerning the production of poetry at Rome, it is chiefly dependent on the support either of the state as a whole or of individual aristocrats. The senate and magistrates commissioned the composition and performance of hymns to the gods during the wars with Carthage in the third century BC (Livy 27.37). New festivals featuring Latin adaptations of Greek plays were held under state sponsorship (Taylor 1937; Goldberg 1998). Prominent Romans welcomed (or coerced?) literary technicians from outside Rome to write and perform in their honor. Two of the earliest identifiable Latin poets – Livius Andronicus and Quintus Ennius – emigrated from southern Italy and became known in part for their affiliation with members of the Roman elite. Indeed it is not unreasonable to understand the invention of Latin literature in the late third and early second century BC as the collective project of a Roman elite concerned to secure, differentiate, and advertise its newly dominant status within Italy and the larger Mediterranean world (Habinek 1998, 34–68). As works composed in Latin, the language of a small section of central Italy, literary texts reinforced the distinction between Rome and other Italian communities to the advantage of the former. As works that emulated Greek style and form, they evoked the more global ambitions of the powerful Romans who commissioned them. Dependent poets, like dependent craftsmen, were presumably more useful to such an endeavor than free, self-supporting writers would have been.

Yet the formalization of aristocratic or elite patronage is not the whole story of Latin literature in the middle to late republic. For one thing, at least some members of the political and economic elite continued to compose works of literature, apparently on their own. From the early third century BC we have a

handful of proverbs attributed to Appius Claudius Caecus, who held the highest positions in the Roman political system (Dufallo 2001); and, of greater import, from the second century BC we know of the efforts of the statesman Marcus Porcius Cato to craft a tradition of prose literature that would remain the purview of elite Roman producers in contrast to the dependent poets (Sciarrino 2011). From the opposite end of the social spectrum, anonymous or semi-anonymous *vates*, or poet-prophets, appear repeatedly in the historical record, often to voice communal anxieties or authorize new religious procedures in the face of aristocratic resistance (Habinek 2005, 220–253; Rüpke 2007). The poet Ennius' repudiation of the *vates* in a famous fragment of his *Annals* (207 Skutsch) is usually regarded by scholars as an aesthetic judgment on their primitive style and versification. But there seems no reason to doubt the social implications as well: in Ennius' view, poetry is best left to recognized experts and those who can subsidize them, not to self-appointed voices of the people.

Rome's decisive victories over Carthage and Macedon in the second century BC enabled a new degree of leisure for those who secured the lion's share of the riches that poured into Italy from newly conquered territories. The new opportunities opened up by military and economic success seem to have encouraged both autonomous and dependent literary production. Some well-to-do Romans turned to writing and other cultural practices as honorable uses of new-found leisure, or *otium*, while others used artistic patronage as a means of enhancing their visibility in the high-stakes world of political and social competition. Anecdotes about the freed African slave Terence, who wrote comedies for the state festivals but was reputed to have associated on intimate terms with leading aristocrats, even to the point of having a daughter who married a Roman knight (Suet. *Poet*. 5), suggest a certain overlap between literary and social attainment. Senators continued to write history, as was to be expected, but by the turn of the second/ first century BC prominent citizens were reputed to be dabbling in erotic poetry as well. According to one anecdote, Valerius Valentinus lost his lawsuit against Gaius Cosconius when the latter introduced as evidence a poem in which Valerius boasted of seducing a free youth and maiden (Val. Max. 8.1.8). Erotic epigrams by the distinguished orator Q. Lutatius Catulus (consul 102 BC) were cited and discussed long after his death (Bardon 1952, 1.115–124, 1.184–185).

During the same period, anonymous and presumably low-status literary craftsmen continued to ply their trade: unattributed verse *elogia* in honor of public figures were inscribed on funeral monuments (e.g. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, I.8–15, discussed by van Sickle 1987); and we might well wonder what assistants' work is left unacknowledged in stories that the noble Decimus Junius Silanus translated all 28 books of Mago's Punic treatise on agriculture (Columella, *Rust*. 1.1.12; Plin. *HN* 18.22, Bardon 1952, 1.83). The consular Q. Lutatius Catulus, apart from writing poetry and prose

himself, paid the highest price on record to acquire a cultivated slave named Daphnis (Suet. *Gramm.* 3; cf. Plin. *HN* 7.128, who identifies M. Scaurus as the buyer). We might think of Catulus' purchase as both an intensification of his own leisure activities through acquisition of a literary collaborator and as an advertisement to his fellow Romans of his lavish wealth and philhellenic good taste. Despite being a scarce commodity, Daphnis, as a slave, would have had little if any opportunity to practice his literary skills except in the household of a master like Catulus. Such was not the case for all literary "friends." The satirist Lucilius (*c.*180 BC to 102/1 BC) may well have amused the noble Scipio and his dinner companions, but as a member of the equestrian order, he had sufficient fortune to devote himself to literature with or without their support – a condition that may account for the vehemence with which he was said to have scourged the city in his multiple books of satires.

Poetry and Power, from Catullus through Ovid

By the first century BC, remains of Latin literature are sufficient to allow consideration not only of the variety of producers of Latin literature (teachers, slaves, newcomers, aristocrats), but also of the ways in which social dependency and social ambition affected literary composition. Even for poets of independent means – who during this period are the majority on record (White 1993) – friends and patrons provided crucial encouragement, support, and means of access to a wider audience (Starr 1987). It is important to recognize that apart from those poets who were subject to direct constraint (i.e. slaves), writers of the period were as likely to use their patrons for their advancement as the other way around. Longstanding scholarly anxieties over the relative autonomy of poets, their freedom to say what they please or not, obscure the fact that most of the poets we know of chose to participate in a system of exchange which, if negotiated properly, promised handsome financial and social rewards. Poets who claim they are writing on topics other than those suggested by their high-status friends, as in the Augustan-era *recusationes*, have no qualms about advertising the fact that their friends asked them to write something on their behalf. As Virgil put it in *Eclogue* 6, *non iniussa cano*, in effect, "I don't lack encouragement from on high for what I write."

Catullus offers a useful illustration of the interdependence of social and aesthetic commitments. He seems to have come from a well-off family in Verona, and like many ambitious young Italians, to have served in the retinue of a Roman general in the East (Wiseman 1985). By his own telling, unlike his military superiors he failed to take full advantage of the financial opportunities offered by such a posting. As a result, much of his invective poetry can be read as a type of popular justice: verbal defamation that seeks to compensate for an alleged loss by inflicting damage on another's reputation

(Lintott 1999). That his targets included a figure as renowned to later history as Julius Caesar makes Catullus seem the very image of the independent, free-spoken poet. Yet the opening poem of his *libellus*, or booklet, pays light-hearted homage to his fellow northern Italian, Cornelius Nepos, who had already established a modest literary reputation at Rome, and throughout his remaining poems Catullus makes certain to differentiate between contemporary writers he considers worthwhile (some of whom, such as M. Caelius Rufus and C. Licinius Calvus, attained a degree of political prominence) and those he disdains. Even his ambiguous ode to Cicero (poem 49) attaches himself, as poet, to the more distinguished orator and ex-consul. In sociological terms, we might say that Catullus stakes his claim, and that of his poetic friends, on a significant portion of the attention space of cultivated Rome (Collins 1998). In time, others' recognition of Catullus and his associates (rightly or wrongly) as constituting a unified school of poetry secured the circulation, survival, and impact of their work on the later tradition – probably just as Catullus would have hoped. Catullus' preference for small, highly wrought verbal artifacts differentiated him from other writers of the time without necessarily implying a wholesale rejection of shared cultural values. A key word he uses to describe the poetry he admires – *urbanus*, or urbane – also figures prominently in Cicero's description of decorum, by which he means knowing the socially appropriate action to adopt in any given situation (*De Officiis*, book 1). Both Catullus and Cicero would have considered it boorish or indecorous not to speak forcefully in the Senate house or wittily at a dinner party.

If Catullus sought to gain the public's attention in part through his choice of literary targets, Horace, writing a generation or so later, was more inclined to rely on those of whom he spoke positively (and vice versa). Whether Horace's literary geniality is a deliberate repudiation of the verbal antagonisms of the previous generation (Schlegel 2005) or an aesthetic innovation for its own sake, it constitutes an even more successful strategy of self-promotion than Catullus' assertiveness. For Horace the challenge was to maintain some semblance of popularity, and some claim to speak for Rome as a whole, while taking advantage of the extraordinarily high status of his own friends and supporters, specifically Maecenas and Augustus. Horace minimizes the material significance of their support (probably rightly: White 1993; Bowditch 2001) and thereby makes more credible his poetic recognition of their non-poetic achievements. His self-deprecating account of his relationship with Maecenas in his satires (e.g. *Sat*. 1.5, 2.6) allows for a more laudatory style of address in the early books of the *Odes* (e.g. *Carm*. 1.1, 1.2, 3.8).

By the end of his career, Horace looks in some ways to have become a court poet, producing on command verses in honor of Augustus' affiliates and potential successors (Suet. *Vit. Hor*.). Viewed from another perspective, however, he can be seen to continue a longstanding tradition whereby the

writer, as a lower status friend, provides the aristocrat or ruler with a much-needed sense of what he looks like – for better or for worse – to others in his society (Habinek 1998, 45–59; Sciarrino 2011, 95–99). Horace goes so far as to revive the title *vates* as a way of claiming a timeless authority immune to immediate political and practical pressures. To what extent his self-presentation was encouraged, inspired, tolerated, or even known to the emperor and others near him is impossible to say. The remark of the ancient biographer Suetonius to the effect that Horace was "commanded" by Augustus to produce the fourth book of *Odes* has been variously interpreted (as noted by White (1993), the language in question elsewhere describes requests from friends); and in any event, recent scholarship has called attention to Roman writers' practice of giving respected friends and acquaintances an opportunity to preview works and suggest changes prior to the circulation of a text to a wider public (Gurd 2007, 2011). Indeed, Cicero identifies such authorial willingness as the mark of a republican, as opposed to autocratic temperament (Gurd 2007). Nor is it out of the question that the emperor sought just such input on his own literary endeavors. According to Suetonius, the young Claudius benefited from the encouragement of Livy and direct assistance of one Sulpicius Flavus when he set about to compose history (Suet. *Claud*. 41); and in a notorious scene from Tacitus' *Annals*, the emperor Nero mocks Seneca for inadequately training him in extemporaneous speech-making (Tac. *Ann*. 14.52.1–14.56.3).

The prime example of political patronage guaranteeing a poem's cultural authority is the emperor Augustus' encouragement and support of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The ancient sources tell of the poet's recitation of portions of his epic to members of the imperial household and report that Augustus himself overruled the poet's command to have the incomplete poem burned upon his death (*Vit. Don*. 37–42). Within a few years Virgil's epic seems to have become a staple of Roman elementary education, a development due no doubt to its quality and subject matter as well as its celebrated status. From time to time, the de facto imperial endorsement of the poem has led to intense speculation as to its political aims. But there is no evidence of imperial intervention in the form or content of the work, and no easy or agreed-upon relationship of the *Aeneid* to the political projects of Augustus and his supporters. Indeed, on at least one sensitive topic – the defeat of fellow Roman and former personal ally Antony at Actium – Virgil and his fellow poets seem to have given Augustus an acceptable way of framing the issue for the Roman public (Gurval 1995).

Where we might see Virgil, Horace, and others accommodating the will of patrons is in their gradual adoption of more serious (or at least more overtly civic) topics and of correspondingly grander genres and styles. Virgil's career progresses from pastoral to didactic to historical epic; Horace turns from satire to lyric to philosophical epistle, and within his lyric collection of *Odes*

moves gradually toward more explicitly public themes. Even Propertius more or less abandons love for aetiology (the explanation of causes), while Ovid trumps his elegiac predecessor's move by writing first elegy, then aetiologies for Rome (*Fasti*) and for the natural world (*Metamorphoses*). Do public success and correspondingly closer ties to powerful patrons motivate the deepening in tone? Or does growing self-confidence allow a poet to tackle topics and genres he had previously rejected? Interestingly, each of the major Augustan poets seems to have drawn inspiration both from the developing tradition of highly sophisticated self-referential elite art and from more popular or everyday forms of expression, including mime, incantation, prophecy, and lament. The poets' urge to coordinate, unify, and celebrate the verbal resources of the Roman people has a certain affinity with their rulers' efforts to create harmony out of political chaos and to reform and reorder the whole of society (on which see Galinsky 1992; Wallace-Hadrill 1997). The *Aeneid* in particular, with its unblinking depiction of cruelty, loss, struggle, and misplaced hope and its evocation of a range of verbal and ritual practices is much more a tribute to the shared experiences of the poet's generation than a brief for any narrowly defined political goals.

In one perhaps unexpected respect, the material support provided by patrons does seem to have prompted, or at least permitted, a particular aesthetic outlook.Much as the establishment of the Alexandrian library by the Ptolemies in the third century BC had enabled the scholarly, retrospective turn that characterizes much Hellenistic Greek poetry, so the transfer of Greek libraries and litterati to Rome, together with the establishment of new libraries, made possible a depth of learning that no single book collector could have accumulated on his own. The availability of works of poetry, science, history, and philosophy was a necessary, if not sufficient, cause for the learnedness that characterizes much of Augustan poetry. Even if the family fortunes of the poets could have secured for them the leisure to devote their time to poetry, personal wealth alone could not have provided the full range of materials that went into the composition of the *Aeneid*, *Metamorphoses*, *Fasti*, and other works of the period. Whether through libraries or access to collectors, elite patrons paved the way for learned poems. Years later Latin authors will still be speaking of the importance of access to specialized libraries – a necessity in an era before mechanical reproduction of texts (Houston 2010).

With the death of Virgil and others of his generation, and the subsequent hardening of the principate into an autocratic dynasty, relations between political authority and literary production became more fraught. Ovid, perhaps misreading the political situation, or perhaps aligning himself a bit too early with some possible successors to Augustus, ended up in exile in Tomi on the Black Sea (Wiedemann 1975; Rudd 1976, 1–31; Syme 1978). Whatever one believes about the causes or nature of his relegation, it is worth noting that the

substantial corpus of exilic poetry could not have survived without collaborators at Rome and the tacit permission of the imperial household. Ovid implores any of a number of Romans by name to plead his case with the emperor. Should we think of these friends and addressees as in some sense literary patrons? Is it in part to honor their reputations that the poems were transcribed and circulated? Or was it perhaps the schools of rhetoric – where Ovid had made quite a name for himself while still in Rome – that kept alive the reputation and works of the disgraced poet? Regardless of the sad finale of the poet's career, his work lived on (as he predicted) in part because he caught the tempo of the times. Although critics have been indefatigable in identifying instances in which Ovid's wit targets the pretentions of his political superiors (e.g. Barchiesi 1997; Boyle 2003), it is equally true that his triumphalist view of Rome as the outcome of all prior history (and fiction!) allows for a reading of his poetry as largely in line with imperial ambitions (Galinsky 1992; Habinek 2002). Ovid's exile – in effect the opposite of patronage – neither silenced his voice, nor, as far as can be told, reduced his impact on the aesthetic choices of his literary successors.

Places for Poetry in Imperial Rome: Schools, Households, Contests, and the Court

The possible means through which Ovid's poetry was preserved, despite the author's disgrace, remind us of the diverse contexts in which literature flourished during the early empire. Schools of literature and rhetoric, elite households, public performances, and imperial liberality all played a role in sustaining Roman literary culture across multiple generations – and all invite reflection on the political significance of surviving literary texts.

Schools proliferated under the empire because they provided a means of entry to elite occupations for students of various social levels. But schools had to be staffed by professionals, and these *grammatici* (teachers of language and literature) or *rhetores* (instructors in eloquence) also played an important role in the production, transmission, and interpretation of literature (Kaster 1997 ; Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley 2009; Bloomer 2011). Whether as extensions of prominent households or free-standing institutions, schools provided a source of revenue for educated individuals who might turn their talents to the creation of literature as well. For example, Melissus, who was born free but fell into slavery, was a *grammaticus* in the household of Maecenas and later administrator of the libraries in the portico of Octavia that were endowed by Augustus (Suet. *Gramm*. 21; Bardon 1952, 2.49–52) Melissus wrote both poetry and prose, including a commentary on Virgil. His career exemplifies the intersecting roles of schools, libraries, and direct elite support in the production of literature. It also shows how the decisions of the *grammatici* shaped the literary canon that would be transmitted from one generation to the next. To write commentary on Virgil's poetry, even of a critical sort (as was

often the case), was to give the poetry a significance that invited further reading and to insulate it from the sort of interpolation and excerpting that altered other, less favored texts. Almost a century after Melissus, Marcus Valerius Probus, a grammarian originally from Beirut, played a crucial role in stabilizing the texts of Terence, Lucretius, Virgil, and other Latin poets, including some who had fallen out of fashion. In effect, he turned himself into a patron after the fact for an important group of poets. The mix of reading, teaching, and writing that comprised the labor of famous grammarians was no doubt reflected in the activities of less prestigious teachers throughout the empire. For example, the large number of anonymous verse inscriptions found in virtually every province during the first few centuries AD requires us to hypothesize either assertive amateurs or local schoolteachers for hire – or both.

If the *grammatici* played an important role in the preservation of literature, schools of rhetoric, which enrolled the alumni of the grammar schools, provided impetus for the composition of new works. Although training budding orators was the primary task of the rhetoricians, the practice in invention and analysis of arguments, stylistic embellishment, and effective presentation they provided inevitably spilled over into the production of poetry and other literature. Imperial Latin's preference for paradox, sententiousness, visualization, and dramatic effect has long been understood as deriving from the shared rhetorical education of most writers. To the extent that rhetoric schools themselves were patronized by leading officials, including the emperor himself, we may understand the predominant style of Latin poetry under the empire as at least indirectly the product of patronage.

Elite households provided students and in some cases accommodations for literary instruction; they supported literary activity in other ways as well. Already Horace offered a mildly satirical image of fathers and sons versifying over dinner (*Epist*. 2.1.109–110); but he addressed a serious work of poetry, the *Ars Poetica*, to the Pisones, members of a distinguished family whose literary interests are otherwise well attested. The Spanish family of the Annaei Senecae provided a cluster of literary luminaries in a relatively short period of time: the elder Seneca (*c*.50 BC to *c*.AD 40) wrote memoirs of the early days of the declamation schools which provide key evidence for the overlap between poetic and oratorical ambition during the early principate. Seneca's son, also named Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC – AD 65) went on to become one of the most important of all Latin writers, composing philosophical treatises, tragedies, and learned studies of geography and natural science. And the latter's nephew was Lucan, best known for his epic poem on the civil war between Caesar and Pompey.

The case of the Annaei illustrates the difficulty of separating out personal agency from patronal support in assessing a literary career. Seneca the Elder was an outsider to Rome who seems to have used his memoirs in part to call

attention to the literary activity of his fellow Spaniards (Bloomer 1997). By dedicating the memoirs to his sons, he offered them public deference every bit as significant as, say, Horace's address to Maecenas, or Manilius' to Tiberius. And the sons no doubt profited from the father's literary and social attentions. The younger Seneca in turn brought others into the public eye, even as he profited enormously, in wealth and prestige, from being invited into the household of the aging emperor Claudius to assist in grooming his stepson Nero for public life (Griffin 1976). The Senecas were thus patrons as well as clients, beneficiaries as well as benefactors. Their exchanges with their "friends" entailed tangible as well as intangible benefits.

Perhaps of greatest importance, elite households, with their centrally located residences and extensive social connections, attracted audiences for writers, whether they hailed from within the *familia* (household) or beyond. Although Latin poetry was an oral performance art as well as a script throughout its entire history, under the empire the institution of the recitation began to loom large in writers' accounts of their works' reception. Such recitations might take place in a public setting, but as often as not they were a way of extending the influence of elite households, as well as preserving a quasi-autonomous sphere of action for aristocrats, who could no longer compete so openly for high honors in the face of the emperor's political and social superiority (Dupont 1997; Johnson 2010). The letters of Pliny and of Fronto provide rich evidence of the complex games of assertion, deference, and evaluation that characterized literary recitations. And the miscellanist Aulus Gellius attests to the ways in which attendance at such events could prompt further literary or scholarly activity on the part of the audience (Rust 2009). In that sense, the host of the recitation patronized not just the reciter but the audience as well.

Of course at the apex of the social pyramid stood the emperor and his family, whose literary interests prompted a range of reactions, from anxiety to ambition to affability, among poets and other writers. The emperors could and sometimes did punish writers for what they wrote – although perhaps not so often as writers would have us believe, since it is easier to blame the censorship of one party than to explore the potential culpability of two. But the emperors were often poets themselves: we know of verse compositions by Augustus, Tiberius, Nero, Titus, Domitian, Hadrian, and others, who seem to have shared a taste for literary composition with other members of the social elite, and to have treated it, like golf in corporate America, as an occasion for both relaxation and networking. The emperor Nero surrounded himself with literary figures, including the philosopher Cornutus, who advised him against composing an epic on Roman history (Bardon 1952, 2.137). Hadrian exchanged epigrams with the poet Annius Florus. Even the late emperor Alexander Severus (AD 222–235) is reported to have enjoyed hearing the poems of his friend Serenus (Bardon 1952, 2.251). Finally, the emperors were in the position to bestow extraordinary financial and other rewards on literary

favorites, both directly and indirectly. Directly, we hear of Augustus' award of a million sesterces to the tragedian Varius Rufus and Vespasian's gift of half million to the epic poet Saleius Bassus (Suet. *Vesp*. 18, Tac. *Dial*. 9.5). Since we don't know the prior financial situation of either poet, we can't be certain what difference the gesture made in their lives; but it seems hard to believe the size of the awards didn't inspire greater efforts on the part of other writers. Indirectly, the emperors supported festivals (not to mention festival sites) that included lucrative contests in various artistic genres (Hardie 1983; Leach 2004, 101–104), while influential members of their households provided material assistance to writers and artists (Leberl 2004). Among the memorable imperial innovations was the poetry contest at the Alban Festival where the poet Statius received his golden crown. Occasions like this also remind us of the persistent orality of even the most complex, sophisticated poetic productions in the Roman world. Rarely if ever did writers lose the sense of text as script for potential performance or re-enactment: for this reason, attention to the acoustic elements of language permeates ancient literary production.

The variety of contexts for the composition and performance of poetry makes it unlikely that any poet wrote solely at the command of an emperor unless he chose that kind of career. High honors and rewards required respect for sponsors, but this is a far cry from writing on demand or to advance a specific course of action. A writer who did not wish to risk an emperor's wrath had opportunities to pursue safe subjects in safe contexts, much like any writer today. Informers, known as *delatores*, might stir trouble by distorting or falsifying a writer's intentions, but poetry was no more or less a target than other activities. Where the Roman world especially differed from the modern was in the absence of a large, anonymous reading public that could support literature that had radical or revolutionary aspirations. To reach a large audience a writer inevitably relied on a wide circle of supporters who could see to it that his works were copied and circulated or could provide occasions for their public performance. Booksellers plied their trade (White 2010), but there is little evidence that they generated demand for works other than those that circulated through other social networks as well. To the extent that we hear of genuinely oppositional movements in the Roman world they are prompted by word of mouth or clandestine communication among subordinate communities. Classical Latin literature offers little in the way of express opposition to the ownership of slaves, the subordination of women, or the military domination of non-Roman subjects, despite widespread differences of opinion on a host of less disruptive issues. Poetry and art did little if anything to undermine the social arrangements that sustained them.

Indeed among the most persistent complaints of the poets is not that the social system is unfair, but that poets receive too little reward within it. Juvenal's satires bemoan the indignities to which the poet possessed of artistic integrity

is subjected – from listening to the recitations of mediocrities (*Satire* 1.1–6) to selling librettos to pantomime dancers (*Satire* 7.86–87). On Juvenal's telling only the emperor fulfills his obligation to the arts, the rest of the elite being too greedy or insipid to give poets like him their due. Martial contrasts the travails of Juvenal as he wanders the noisy Suburra or sweats across the thresholds of the rich with his own retirement in Spain (*Epigram* 12.18.1–6). Yet that retirement was likely due in part to Martial's too close affiliation with the dead and disgraced emperor Domitian (Sullivan and Whigham 1987). In the same book of epigrams in which he contrasts his life with Juvenal's he praises his own patron Priscus Terentius for providing him with "honorable indolence" (*ingenuae pigritiae*, *Epigram* 12.3.6). The topos of the put-upon poet that characterizes imperial literature seems to owe as much to the Hellenistic and Catullan tradition of publicizing literary rivalries as it does to any diminution in the rewards of a literary career.

Neither hackwork, then, nor call to action, the literature produced within schools and elite households, even the poetry carved in stone or transcribed on building walls, nonetheless served a variety of purposes which might loosely be regarded as social or political and which help to explain the aesthetic characteristics of surviving texts.

First, the embedded nature of literary production promoted an emphasis on mastery of received forms – literary form, first and foremost, but cultural patterns and practices as well. Virtuosity became an end in itself in part because it could be recognized as such, thanks to the overlapping constituencies of writers, teachers, listeners, readers, commentators, and supporters. If the density of literary networks made radical change unlikely, it also created a sense of continuity across time and space that gave confidence to social and political actors. Literary creativity was achieved through rivalry with, not rejection of, the work of predecessors.

Second, the interdependence of social and literary success created an alternative path to renown at least partly independent of military conquest and financial gain. At one time Roman patrons and poets might have been described as forces of civilization, offering subject peoples a way out of benighted barbarism. While such an account conveniently overlooks the cultural ambitions and competencies of everyone else in the empire, it is nonetheless worth noting the extent to which literary composition and literary study exercised a centripetal pull on ambitious individuals from throughout the Roman world. Together with possible rewards in status, immersion in literary study allowed for the cultivation of human faculties not attended to by the institutional framework of empire. Cicero's defense of poetry as a necessary supplement to a life of civic and military discipline (for example, in his speech on behalf of the poet Archias) would have found support among later generations as well. In this vein, it is not surprising that two of the persistent themes of Latin literature from the Augustan period through late

antiquity are personal moral improvement and enjoyment of the fleeting beauty of the world. Even the graphic violence that permeates Latin epic (and finds its counterpart in the violence of the arena) paid tribute to the self-sacrifice that was seen as sustaining communal order (Gunderson 1996; cf. Clendinnen 1991). Critics may wish to attribute the violence of Senecan tragedy, for example, to the discomfiture of the literate elite under Nero, but a taste for the explicit is evident in works composed in more serene times as well.

Finally, literature of the imperial period could mediate the individual patron or dedicatee's relationship to the larger community, inhibiting or repairing damage to the social fabric. Horace's ode to Lollius (*Carm*. 4.9) frames his addressee's financial improprieties in other than strictly legal terms, thereby enabling the dishonored official's re-incorporation into Roman society. Seneca's treatise *On Clemency* indirectly reassures its readers of the alleged good intentions of the youthful emperor Nero, to whom it is ostensibly addressed, while his essay *On the Brevity of Life* provides moral cover for his father-in-law's risky decision to retire from public affairs. Several of the poems gathered in Statius' *Silvae* also read as apologiae for their addressees (Nauta 2002). Statius' and Martial's praise of Domitian helps to shape and promulgate a particular image of his rule (Leberl 2004). A writer's tact and mastery of cultural codes could manage issues too sensitive to be addressed directly by interested parties. Social and cultural anxieties too deep for easy analysis could surface and be mollified in the elegant indirectness of versified myth or lyric banter (e.g. Fitzgerald 2000; Miller 2004; Vout 2007; Oliensis 2009).

The Persistence of a Classical Aesthetic

No doubt because of the multiple functions it served, the system of literary communication developed during the early empire persisted into late antiquity and even in certain respects survived the transition from paganism to Christianity. Characteristic of the fourth century, the last in which pagan cults received the financial support of the state, is the career of the poet Ausonius. Born the son of a Greek physician in Gaul, Ausonius labored for some 30 years as a teacher of rhetoric in Bordeaux before being called to the imperial court to teach the heir apparent, Gratian (Green 1991). As a writer he celebrated individual members of his own family, other rhetoricians from Gaul, and the river Mosel, among a host of other topics. Like the Annaei Senecae centuries earlier, he repaid his entourage for their support while reaping the benefits of his own high level of cultivation. And unlike Seneca the Younger, he managed to outlive his imperial patron/protégé: after Gratian was killed in 383, Ausonius retired quietly from public life.

The case of Ausonius illustrates not just the persistence of a system of

exchange between poet and patron but also the continuation or revival of a literary classicism long fostered by such exchange. Ausonius' writings, both prose and poetry, adapt Classical forms to contemporary issues, employing vocabulary, syntax, and imagery remarkably similar to that of his Augustan and early imperial predecessors. At once traditional and innovative, works like the *Parentalia*, in commemoration of dead relatives, or *Mosella*, a celebration of the representative particularities of a secure sector of the imperial heartland, revive the outlook of earlier poets, Virgil in particular, with no apparent anxiety of influence. At the threshold of a new, Christian world, these and other poems exemplify the qualities of descriptive clarity, emotional nuance, and formal order that constitute the essence of a classical or classicizing aesthetic. In so doing they integrate their patrons – and readers – into a seemingly timeless realm of *Romanitas*, even as they advertise their (real or imagined) commitment thereto. The Classical literary tradition created by Virgil, Horace, and others, thanks in part to the patronal support of their social superiors, persisted as a dispenser of social distinction and a unifying frame of reference in a vastly altered cultural and political landscape.

Roughly two generations after Ausonius, the prefect of Italy known to history as Macrobius (Cameron 2011) revived the literary genre of the convivial dialogue to commemorate a number of Ausonius' contemporaries in the seven books of the *Saturnalia*. Macrobius' treatise aims to foster literary and antiquarian study among his contemporaries (*c*.AD 430) by celebrating its vitality among their recent predecessors. His work also bridges the gap between his predominantly Christian audience and their (mostly) pagan grandparents. Although the *Saturnalia* almost pathologically eschews discussion of pagan–Christian conflict, it nonetheless invites a new generation of readers and political actors to acknowledge and foster their shared literary and linguistic heritage. Far from scrambling to exchange poetic compliments for social and financial benefit, Macrobius deploys the accumulated lore of the scholastic tradition to validate the political dominance of leading families. Yet the very fact that Macrobius' dialogue is set in an earlier era (a longstanding convention for dialogue) now suggests a tradition in need of recovery rather than continuation. At the risk of over-schematization, we might say that Ausonius and Macrobius exemplify alternative classicisms of a sort that recur throughout the long afterlife of antiquity: the first taking for granted the vitality, even modernity of Classical forms and styles; the other always at least partially aware of, and troubled by, the distance between then and now. In the one case Classical literature and the aesthetic it transmits are a living source of inspiration; in the other they haunt or cast a shadow over an uneasy present (MacCormack 1998).

In conclusion, in Latin literature, as in other artistic traditions, there is no easy one-to-one correspondence between social or political context and aesthetic outcome. The impact of patronage and other means of support tends to be

indirect, manifest as much in what is overlooked as in what is expressed. Schools, libraries, and festivals play as important a role in sustaining a system of literary production as direct gifts or commands from high-ranking officials, even if the latter attain greater notoriety. Yet in one key respect, Latin literature is the outcome of Roman politics. Despite changes over time, the continuity of the Roman state from the time of the kings to the end of antiquity fostered a sense of continuity within the literary tradition – and vice versa. A persistent albeit malleable classicism is perhaps the most important outcome of patron–client relations and other means of social support. It characterizes virtually all of Roman literature and in its multiple instantiations provides a medium for revival and recovery across the centuries.

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FURTHER READING

White (1993) gathers the evidence for the social and economic status of well-known Augustan poets and discusses the highly developed Latin terminology for relations between poets, patrons, and readers. Nauta (2002) extends White's analysis to consider Flavian-era poets and provides a balanced assessment of their engagement with political leaders of the times. Although many scholars of Latin literature are still reluctant to draw correlations between aesthetics and politics or aesthetics and broader social issues of identity, domination, and the like, a few have made progress in this vein. Barchiesi (1997) considers Ovid's aestheticization of political power, and Habinek (1998, 2002, 2005) examines the role of literature in constructing and promulgating elite identities through both form and content. Fitzgerald (2000) considers the ways in which literature manages elite anxiety over the ownership of slaves; Vout (2007) offers insight into the erotic aspects of Roman poetry and art, while Sciarrino (2011) revisits the key period of the formation of a literary system at Rome in the third and second centuries BC, with careful attention to prose literature as well as poetry. For an introduction to the acoustic texture of Latin poetry, still useful is Wilkinson (1963). For illustration of Latin poetry's cherished allusive qualities, see Clausen (1987) and Hinds (1998).

CHAPTER 5
Music and Dance in Greece and Rome

Eleonora Rocconi

Introduction

In the Classical world, the art of *mousikē* (which embraced the entire field of poetic performance to which the Muses gave their name, including music, song, and dance) was, at the same time, a religious, paideutic, but overall "aesthetic" experience. The emotional effect of any musical event is in fact frequently described by Greek and Latin sources, and the "pleasure" (*hēdonē*) that it was able to arouse in both the performers and the audience (see Aristotle, *Politics* 1339b) is a pivotal element for the comprehension of the great "psychagogic" power (i.e. "leading, or persuading, souls") attributed to music in antiquity and, consequently, of its immense educational and political value. In fact, according to Greek belief, music could influence the character (*ēthos*) of those who were exposed to it. Very soon ancient philosophers started to develop elaborate theoretical principles on which such a power was based, in order to explain the best possible use of music in different contexts: in scholarly literature these principles are known as "the *ēthos* theory of music."[1]

Ancient responses, both emotional and intellectual, to music and artistic experiences may of course be discussed only after having understood the importance and diffusion of music in everyday life. Scholars nowadays widely agree that the identity of musical works depends not only on pure form, but also on aspects of the context in which the sound structure has been created (Davies 2003, 493). Hence a description of the music-historical setting in which such compositions were created and performed becomes essential to the understanding of ancient evaluations of music art works and to the assessment of their impact on individuals and society.

An overview of musical genres in Greek and Roman antiquity may be presented according to different criteria: for modern philosophy of music, an important distinction is that between instrumental and vocal music – that is, music with words – within which we should, in turn, detect also the possible presence of a dramatic setting, as in musical theater. Philosophical discussions on the potential narrative or representational contents in music have in fact to take into account the numerous occasions in which, throughout history, words have been combined with musical melodies and rhythms, thus giving an explicit representational content to musical compositions (Kivy 2002, esp. 160ff.). This fundamental distinction (vocal/instrumental) was certainly

perceived to be significant by ancient people too (even if their concept of *mousikē* was much wider than ours), especially in theoretical contexts where the debate on the "mimetic" – that is, representative – features of *mousikē* was particularly heated, as in Plato's writings (on *mimēsis* in antiquity and its philosophical implications, see Halliwell 2002). Therefore a survey of ancient musical genres which, though mostly relying on other systems of classification attested by ancient sources, also pays attention to such features is not unhistorical and may be rather relevant for an aesthetic approach to ancient Greek and Roman music and dance.

The Culture of *Mousikē* in Archaic and Classical Greece

In recent years, Classical Studies have focused their attention on the ancient Greek world as a *song culture*, stressing the performative aspects of ancient literature, often overlooked in the past, and reconstructing the many different ways and contexts in which it was experienced.[2] Indeed, the Greek culture of *mousikē* included song, poetry, and physical movement, all integrated within an all-embracing event which served to define culture, ethnicity, and gender, and was a core element of many religious and social rituals. The settings for such artistic performances ranged from entertainment in private homes to larger urban or Panhellenic festivals (lit. "involving all Greeks," not just a single polis), where competitive performances took place in public spaces, reinforcing local individualities as well as acting as a dynamic opportunity for exchange and interaction among different parts of the Hellenic world. In these contexts, music acted as the most effective means to arouse deep emotions in the listeners and, hence, to convey and reinforce the values shared by the community involved. Musical practice was deeply implicated in how Greeks defined themselves as human beings.

The kind of music about which we are best informed is the vocal kind, precisely, music combined with words. There are many reasons why this may have happened, mainly the fact that most music in antiquity was preserved not by notation but by memory and tradition (which continued also when music notation started to be developed by professional musicians and instrument players, approximately between the fifth and fourth century BC: see Hagel 2009). Therefore in most cases, when no musical score was preserved, only the words survived: when the Alexandrian librarians organized the poetic material of their past, creating the repertoire on which we currently base our knowledge of ancient Greek literature, they probably had no music notation associated to what they called "lyric poetry" (*lyrikē poiēsis*, that is, poetry sung to the lyre or, more generally, to any musical instrument),[3] probably so termed in order to stress its musicality just at the time when it was actually disappearing.

It is certainly true that vocal music, performed by solo singers or by choruses, was also described as the most important and meaningful kind of music: according to Plato (*Republic* 398d), a musical composition (*melos*) always refers to a combination of elements, which includes words (*logos*), as well as tune (*harmonia*) and rhythm (*rhythmos*), and, when these two latter elements occur with no words, "it is extremely difficult to understand what is intended, or what worthwhile representation is like" (*Laws* 669e).[4] A verbal content seems in fact to have been implied also in instrumental solo pieces, as in the case of the famous *Pythikos nomos*, usually performed during the Apollinean festivals (see below).

One of the most distinctive features of ancient Greek music was certainly its close link to a particular occasion and function. Again Plato, in the *Laws* (700b), suggests a strict classification of musical "types and forms" (*eidē kai schēmata*, on which later sources also continued to rely) on the basis of their employment in religious and social rituals, complaining about the contemporary commingling of musical genres and cults or social events. Especially in religious music, within which we should include all music performances circumscribing in various ways the central act of sacrifice, the text was extraordinarily important: myths and traditional stories of gods and heroes formed the substance of vocal poems and were supposed to reinforce religious belief in the audience (Kowalzig 2008, esp. 13–15). The theatricality of this myth telling was then enhanced and made more effective by dance, song, and musical accompaniment, occurring all together in spectacular choral exhibitions.

Choreia, that is, the practice of choral dancing and singing in public spaces, was mainly a collective act of religious worship by the community, serving the purposes of reinforcing the religious creed, educating the citizens, and, consequently, bringing order to society (see especially Plato *Laws* 654a–b). There were choral songs for many different occasions, such as marriages (*hymenaioi* and *epithalamioi*), funerals (*thrēnoi*), female transition rites (*partheneia*), and sporting victories (*epinikia*), all basically imbued with the same religious elements we find in more properly cultic repertoire, that is, sung prayers addressed to the gods, like the dithyrambs and the paeans, the former devoted to Dionysus, the latter to Apollo. Nevertheless, although such a distinction is fundamentally correct, both choral forms underwent a significant transformation during the centuries: the paean could occasionally be addressed to other gods, or be sung on many different occasions, sometimes by a soloist too; the dithyramb was soon secularized, at least in content, becoming an articulate and sophisticated art form.

The instruments which usually accompanied choral exhibitions were the *aulos* (a reed-blown pipe, almost always played in pairs) or the *kithara* (a square-based string instrument), both professional *organa* thus unsuitable for general education (see Aristotle, *Politics* 1341a), which had the advantage of playing

louder than other instruments (thanks to the presence of reeds, in the case of the *aulos*, and to a large sound box, in the case of the *kithara*) and could, hence, be heard over long distances outdoors.

Literary sources all agree on pointing out the importance of the "pleasure" that, experienced by participants in the religious rituals thanks to the added value of musical ingredients, could become a kind of "offering" to the divinity which, in this way, might secure his or her assistance or favor. In the *Iliad*, the end of the quarrel between the Greek army and Apollo is propitiated by a paean with the purpose of arousing pleasure in the god (*Il.* 1.472–4), while in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (145ff.) the deity "delights his heart" (*epiterpetai ētor*) when, in Delos, the Ionians come together and "turn their minds to boxing and dancing and song, and delight [*terpousin*] in them, whenever they set up their festival"; in the *Laws* (654a), Plato furnishes a (fanciful) etymology of the word *choros* ("they have given choruses/*chorous* their name by derivation from the joy/*chara* that is natural to them") which clearly indicates how a joyful disposition was felt to be inherent in *choreia*; finally, some centuries later, Strabo (probably drawing on Poseidonios) still states that "music, which includes dancing as well as rhythm and melody at the same time, by the delight [*hēdonēi*] it affords and by its artistic beauty [*kallitechniāi*], brings us in touch with the divine" (Strabo 10.3.9, tr. Furley and Bremer 2001).

Therefore in ancient Greek culture an aesthetically pleasing effect of music performances was strictly connected with the fulfillment of their main aims, especially in religious contexts. Poets frequently used synesthetic imagery to describe sounds specifically on the basis of their pleasant perception, as in the metaphor (very common in poetic contexts) according to which lyric poets were described as bees distilling their "sweet honey," that is, their melodies.

This kind of comment, however, turned out to be negative when the pleasure aroused by music was directed toward inappropriate ends, as in the case of some forms of cultic music which soon started to lose their original religious flavor to become sophisticated spectacular art forms, whose textual content was overshadowed by a virtuoso and musically demanding performance. Dithyrambs, in particular, paved the way to late fifth–fourth century BC avant-garde music style: composers such as Melanippides of Melos, Cinesias of Athens, Timotheus of Miletus, and Philoxenus of Cythera were unfavorably described by comedians and philosophers just because of their pursuit of an aesthetically catchy *poikilia* ("variation and embellishment") in their rhythms and melodies.[5] From a practical point of view, musical *poikilia* was obtained through two main technical devices. The first was the abandoning of antistrophic composition, once typical of choral performances: in this formally constructed genre of poetry, one stanza, the strophe, was immediately followed by another, the antistrophe, which had exactly the same rhythm and meter and was sung to the same melody (a stable framework of

repetitions most probably intended to aid the dance, but occasionally applied to solo songs too). Second, *poikilia* could be obtained by means of melodic movement through a multiplicity of notes belonging to different scales and genres (see Dionysus of Halicarnassus, *The Arrangement of Words* 19). Both of them were possible thanks to the organological innovations realized on the instrument which usually accompanied the dithyrambs, that is, the *aulos*, the first *organon* to become *polychordotatos* (i.e. "the most numerous-noted of all") and *panharmonios* (namely, "on which it was possible to play all the *harmoniai*" or "scales"; see Plato, *Republic* 399d), having being bored with additional holes to permit modulations.

Even more subject to ancient criticism was, in this respect, solo singing, which more easily than choral songs could free itself from the rigid structure imposed by the rhythmical arrangement of syllabic quantities (that is, allowing music to apply its own rhythm to words and soon abandoning antistrophic composition); it was able to adapt the melody to the wider melodic range available on modern musical instruments. As a Peripatetic source explicitly states when commenting on musical innovations introduced by virtuosi in the Classical period, it is easier for an individual performer, especially if he is also a competitive artist (*agōnistēs*), to execute many modulations than for a large group of people, as in the case of choruses, in old times compounded only by free men, hence not professionals (Ps.-Aristotle, *Problems* 19.15).

Monodic songs (i.e. sung by an individual) could be performed both in contexts limited to a select audience, the most important of which was the symposium (whose singers, however, were simply members of the gathering, not *technitai*), and in front of a wider public, as in the case of solo competitions performed in local and Panhellenic religious festivals by *agōnistai*, whose primary goals were mass recognition and fame.

The symposium was the context for the enjoyment and preservation of a considerable part of Archaic and Classical melic poetry, composed specifically to be sung there or, if composed for a different occasion, re-performed and adapted to the new circumstances, as in the case of excerpts from theatrical songs. The most commonly played instruments to accompany solo songs within symposia were bowl lyres (both in their standard version, the *chelys*, and in the long-armed one, the *barbitos*) as well as pipes, more specifically, the *aulos*. On these occasions there were poetry competitions among participants, sometimes alternating song by song, sometimes "capping" the verses previously sung by another guest, as in performances of convivial songs called *skolia* (lit. "winding, obscure," probably with reference to the twisted path of their performance), which frequently celebrated the amusements of the gathering. The function of music was mainly that of furnishing pleasure to symposiasts, as is clearly shown by the numerous references to the "sweetness" of singing and playing in fragments of such

poetry. Within symposia, however, solo performances could hardly become highly sophisticated exhibitions involving technicalities, not even when professional instrumentalists of a specific kind were appointed for accompanying the singers, as well as for playing instrumental background music. These performers, indicated by iconographic evidence of the late sixth–fifth century BC as the official entertainers of symposiastic contexts, were *aulētrides* (i.e. "female *aulos* players"), *psaltriai* (i.e. "harp girls"), and *orchēstrides* (i.e. "female dancers"), women of low social position, basically accomplished courtesans called *hetairai*, hired by the host of the symposium for their artistic abilities as well as for the erotic enjoyment of male gatherings (see Rocconi 2006).

More explicitly devoted to bravura were the aulodic and especially kitharodic exhibitions, that is, performances of skilled solo singers, accompanied by an *aulos* player (*aulōidia* < *aulos* + *ōidē*) or by the singer himself on his *kithara* (*kitharōidia* < *kithara* + *ōidē*), who competed at the numerous religious festivals widespread in the Greek world. Professional kitharodic exhibitions (the most ancient and esteemed among solo performances; see Power 2010) may be dated back to the Mycenaean age, when minstrels such as those described in Homeric poems sang their songs to the four-stringed *phorminx* (a round-based box lyre, ancestor of the professional *kithara*) in order to amuse their public at royal courts. In *Odyssey* Book 8.246 ff., the king of the island of Scheria, Alcinous, asks Demodocus to play his "clear-sounding *phorminx*" and to start his solo, surrounded by some dancers, recalling how the Phaeacians "continually delight in feasting and the *kitharis* and dances."

It is only with the establishment of religious feasts in which singers competed for prizes, however, that solo songs (called *nomoi*) became a fertile ground for innovation, with the purpose of amusing the ever more demanding audience. In the seventh century BC, the most famous solo singer who accompanied himself on the *kithara* was Terpander from Lesbos, the founder and first victor of musical competitions in the Karneia[6] (one of the great national festivals of Sparta, the main center for Greek musical culture in the Archaic age), who also obtained four consecutive victories at the famous Pythian festivals at Delphi, at that time held every eight years. The kitharode's fame led him to be credited with many inventions and improvements of solo performance: he is said to have invented the *barbitos*, increased the number of the lyre's strings from four to seven and extended the scale from a seventh to an octave, introducing the Dorian *nētē*, as well as composed a set of kitharodic preludes (*prooimia*) in hexameters[7]. More importantly, he seems to have been the first to give a formal division to the structure of kitharodic *nomos*, supposedly divided by him into seven parts (Pollux *Onomastikon* 4.66): beginning (*archa*), after-the-beginning (*metarcha*, that is, in rhythmical responsion with the beginning), transition (*katatropa*, i.e. a transitional section), after-the-transition (*metakatatropa*, i.e. in responsion with the

transition), navel (*omphalos*, that is, its central native part), seal (*sphragis*, where the author "signed" the composition), epilogue (*epilogos*).

Such an apparently strict structure attributed to this musical genre by the sources should most probably be intended not as a fixed and unchanging scheme that performers had to faithfully reproduce, but only as a sequence of sections with a pre-established form and content within which every author could, nevertheless, feel free to create or improvise his own melody. In fact its presence did not stop the soloists' pursuit of constantly new and catchy devices to capture audiences' attention and gain popularity, as well as to become richer! On this see Ps.-Plutarch *On Music* 1135d, where Timotheus and Philoxenus are said to have pursued the style called *philanthrōpon* (i.e. "designed to please the crowd") and *thematikon* (i.e. "money-making").

When Timotheus of Miletus (composer of both dithyrambs and kitharodic odes) created what we nowadays consider the best preserved example of New Music, that is, the famous kitharodic *nomos* titled *The Persians*, realized according to the most innovative music style previously mentioned, he seems to have preserved, at least partially, the traditional division set up by Terpander: after a main part in which the author describes the rout of the Persians at Salamis (likely, the *omphalos* of the song), he switches to a section (evidently functioning as *sphragis*) in which he defends himself against the Spartans, who had rejected him because of his musical innovations, placing himself within the great poetic tradition of the past (that is, Orpheus and Terpander); the poem closes then with a short prayer to Apollo (realizing the *epilogos*, probably incomplete).

This constant search for novelty and aesthetic glamour by kitharodic soloists has often been interpreted by modern scholars as a sign of progressive detachment of music performances from the religious frame within which they had always been inserted (for example, Barker 1995, 263f.), and this may certainly be true, at least to some extent. But given the fondness of Greeks for excellence in competition (and the high level of partiality in the evidence on secularization of traditional religious music), the growing demonstration by performers of their virtuoso skills could be explained also as an attempt to realize, in the most pleasant way possible, the best tribute to the gods (see the *kallitechnia* mentioned by Strabo): at the Pythian games, for instance, we are told that aulodic competitions were soon canceled because of their threnodic and lugubrious character, hence not pleasing enough for the gods (nor the audience!).[8]

The term *nomos* itself (lit. "law") used by later sources to designate a "style of song with a prescribed *harmonia* and a determinate rhythm" (Suda *n* 478), so called, we are told, "because deviation from the form of pitching established for each type was not permitted" (Ps.-Plutarch *On music* 1133b–c), did not come into common use in the musical field until the fifth, maybe even the fourth century BC (see Barker 1984, 250). Although traditional solo songs

had certainly existed before that time, the etymological connection between special categories of compositions and the inviolability of their regulations (in strict connection with their religious aims) should most probably be ascribed to Plato's *Laws*, a dialogue where the philosopher constantly recalls how all the elements of *mousikē* need to be consistent with one another and to fit into a particular genre by law (700a–701b) and where he skillfully shifts from the proper meaning to a metaphoric usage of the term *nomos* (see esp. 799e, where he talks about the musical usage of this term as "a strange [*atopon*] fact"). In substance, we can reasonably assume that such a strict regulation ascribed to traditional religious music is fictitious and that an aesthetic of "pleasure" has always been perceived as essential to catch the audience's attention and reinforce its belief.

Thanks to immense popularity gained by the kitharodes in these competitive festivals, the word *nomos* came then to be used especially of their performances. But it is worth remembering that in the same contexts in which these *technitai* excelled, there were also competitions of instrumental *nomoi*, so that they were grouped into four classes in total: *kitharōidia*, *aulōidia*, *kitharistikē* (sc. *technē*, instrumental solos for *kithara*), and *auletikē* (sc. *technē*, instrumental solos for *aulos*). According to Plato (*Gorgias* 501d–e), auletic and kitharistic were definitely agonistic arts aimed merely at pleasing their audience (*tēn hēdonēn* […] *monon diōkein*): indeed we know that, thanks to the exceptional organological developments of the *aulos* mentioned above, *auletikē* especially became very fashionable in that period.

Plato's polemic against instrumental music in the *Laws*, however, says something more. Although the philosopher reduces the use of the *aulos* and the *kithara*, when they do not accompany dance and song, to "uncultured and vulgar showmanship" (*amousia kai thaumatourgia*), nevertheless he does not dismiss instrumental music as pure nonsense, leaving open the possibility that it was always a *mimēsis* of something, like vocal music: all he says, in fact, is that (lacking words) it is extremely difficult to identify what it represents or is trying to represent:

> and further, the composers tear rhythm and posture away from melody, putting bare words into metres, setting melody and rhythm without words, and using the *kithara* and the *aulos* without the voice, a practice in which it is extremely difficult – since rhythm and *harmonia* occur with no words – to understand what is intended, and what worthwhile representation it is like. It is essential that we accept the principle that all such practices are utterly inartistic, if they are so enamoured of speed and precision and animal noises that they use the music of the *aulos* and the *kithara* for purposes other than the accompaniment of dance and song: the use of either by itself is characteristic of uncultured and vulgar showmanship.
>
> (Plato *Laws* 669d–670a)

This mimetic character of instrumental music (which also aims at representing characters and dispositions of the soul) seems actually to be implicit in the titles and contents of auletic and kitharistic *nomoi* handed down by the sources[9]: among kitharistic *nomoi*, the *nomoi* of Zeus, of Athena, and of Apollo are mentioned, while, among the auletic ones, we are informed of the *Polykephalos* (lit. "many-headed," in honor of Apollo), the *Harmateios* (maybe so called because it musically describes the acute and thin sound produced by the chariot's route, see *Etymologicum Magnum* 145.25ff.), the *nomoi* of Ares and of Athena. The most famous of this latter group is the so-called *Pythikos nomos* (of which also a kitharistic version was later realized), providing an outstanding example of how these pieces may be connected with the divinities to whom they were addressed: in other words, each of them had a specific cultic function not only thanks to the religious contexts of its performance (i.e. the various festivals in honor of the numerous gods and goddesses of the Greek Pantheon), but especially by virtue of the narrative character attributed by the Greeks to pure instrumental music and of the semantic content any of these performances was supposed to convey.

Indeed, according to Pollux, the *Pythikos nomos* had five parts and was

> a representation [*dēlōma*, lit. showing, display] of the battle of Apollo against the serpent. In the *peira* [test, trial] he surveys the ground to see if it is suitable for the contest. In the *katakeleusmos* [challenge] he calls up the serpent, and in the *iambikon* he fights: the *iambikon* also includes sounds like those of the *salpinx* and gnashing like those of the serpent as it grinds its teeth after being pierced with arrows. The *spondeion* represents [*dēloi*] the victory of the god; and in the *katachoreusis* [dance of triumph] the god performs a dance of victory.
>
> (Pollux *Onomastikon* 4.84, cf. Strabo 9.3.10)

This account insists, also verbally (see the use of the verb *deloō* and its derivative *dēlōma*), on the descriptive and mimetic character of the five musical sections of the piece (and it was probably the same in the other instrumental *nomoi*, if, as it seems, they described mythical episodes related to the divinities involved), realized both through mechanical devices (like, for instance, the so-called *syrinx* of the *aulos*, a kind of speaker-hole that could help to produce very high harmonics, used to imitate the hisses of the expiring snake) and through special playing techniques (like the *odontismos*, mentioned by other sources too, in which the *glōtta* was pushed against the tooth in order to reproduce the serpent's teeth grinding: cf. Hesychius *o* 98 and Pollux *Onomastikon* 4.80).

This description of the *Pythikos nomos* provides a revealing example of contemporary audience expectations concerning the narrative content of any instrumental performance, although there was no unquestioned agreement on the means through which composers and musicians could realize it, if we are

to believe what we are told about the piper Telephanes of Megara, who was "so strongly opposed to the *syrinx* of the *aulos* that he forbade the makers of *auloi* to build it into the instruments, and it was primarily for that reason that he refused to perform at the Pythian games" (Ps.-Plutarch *On music* 1138a).

The genre that more than any other developed the potential, as well as the problems, of the mimetic features inherent in the ancient concept of *mousikē*, nevertheless, was musical theater. In ancient Greece, theatrical drama was part of a religious festival devoted to Dionysus, originally organized by the polis of Athens and later widespread in the entire Greek world. The main element of its program (which also comprised spectacular dithyrambs) was the competitive performance of dramatic plays that always involved music: in tragedies and comedies, choral songs called *stasima* were sung and danced to the accompaniment of the *aulos* in the *orchēstra* and interspersed with actors' episodes which, though usually spoken, displayed a strong rhythmical beat based on iambic meter. Sometimes parts of actors' roles (as well as some choral parts, as in the case of the march anapaests of the *parodos*, i.e. the entering song of the chorus in the *orchēstra*) could be delivered as a kind of recitative called *parakatalogē* (i.e. *katalogē*, that is, recitation "beside" or "along with" musical accompaniment, the irregularity of which was thought to produce a tragic effect, see Ps.-Aristotle *Problems* 19.6) or, from the mid-fifth century BC onward, were more often sung as monodies, lyrical duets, or in concert with the chorus. These duets were called "amoebean" songs (from *ameibō*, lit. "to exchange"), while the formal lament, in which the voices of actors and chorus were interwoven in extended threnody typical of tragedies, was termed *kommos* (from *koptō*, lit. "to beat," i.e. the head and breast in lamentation).

Besides acting as an outstanding medium to reinforce ethical values in the community and to stress Athenian cultural self-assertion among the other Greek *poleis*, theatrical performances accomplished and progressively enhanced the aesthetics of spectacular entertainment, relying mostly on their musical components (especially since the second half of the fifth century BC, when innovative playwrights such as Euripides were influenced by the mimetic and expressionist music typical of dithyrambic and kitharodic composers, and exponentially increasing in the fourth century and in the Hellenistic period). According to Aristotle, in fact, "of the other elements which enrich tragedy, the most important is song-making" (*Poetics* 1450b, tr. Halliwell 1986) and even Plutarch, between the first and second century AD, describes the experience of watching tragedy as "a wonderful aural and visual experience" (*On the fame of the Athenians* 5, 348c). The consciousness of this phenomenon in later centuries was such that ancient theater, especially tragedy, inspired the Western world's first modern operas, which began as an attempt to restore Greek drama to the stage. Indeed, the paradigm of ancient Greek tragedy forms the basis of theoretical conceptualizations of the origin

of the *opera* by members of the Florentine Camerata (a group of humanists, musicians, and poets gathered under the patronage of Giovanni Bardi, in sixteenth-century Florence), offering an authoritative example of the blending between words and music for expressive purposes (even if, from a practical point of view, this new musical form should be actually considered a natural evolution of contemporary theatrical genres, such as the pastoral drama and the intermezzo; see Pirrotta 1975).

But if modern theatrical staging of musical drama was, from the start, a controversial artistic attempt to fit music to words and stories (since, as some modern scholars have pointed out, the formal repetitiveness of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music could produce what they call disanalogy when combined with the linear, directional character of fictional narrative),[10] ancient tragedy posed no problem to intellectuals with respect to the combination of these two different expressive means (not even to Plato, since all he cared about was the "goodness" of what was represented in any kind of artistic medium: his unwillingness to grant theatrical genres the status of useful art was due only to the morally bad – hence useless, if not dangerous – models they offered to spectators, not to any inconsistencies between the two levels of *mimēsis*).[11] The ease with which musical theatre grew in antiquity, without posing any problem of accommodation between musical structure and dramatic flow, may principally be explained by the intimately musical nature of ancient Greek language, so that the representation on stage of mythical stories through sung performance did not seem implausible to the audience. The situation is completely different with modern languages, which do not have any musical form. Let us consider what Jacopo Peri, a member of the Camerata, says in his introduction to *Le musiche sopra l'Euridice* (1600, fol. a1r):

> Seeing that dramatic poetry was concerned and that therefore *one ought to imitate with song someone speaking* (*and without doubt people never spoke singing*), I decided that the ancient Greeks and Romans (who according to the opinion of many sang entire tragedies on stage) employed a melody that, elevated beyond ordinary speech, descended so much from the melody of song that it assumed an intermediate form.
>
> (tr. Palisca 1985)

More importantly, in the beginning Greek dramas did not display closed or self-contained musical forms (like, for instance, *da capo* arias, typical of seventeenth-century melodrama) in those parts of the play where the plot evolved: while the *stasima* usually presented the strophic arrangement typical of ancient choral poetry (always keeping a "diegetic," i.e. narrative, content, since they were not exactly acted, but sung and danced by a chorus), the ongoing story within actors' episodes was not originally set to music, but simply arranged according to the rhythmic patterns of iambic verse. Only

when professional actors started to realize the most pathetic moments of tragedy through song (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1449b) did dramas undergo a deep transformation that we can compare to the passage from the so-called *stile rappresentativo* of Monteverdi's operas (whose driving force was a vocal style faithful to human speech, a kind of "conversation in tones" where human talking was dramatically represented) to what we could call "number opera" (namely, *opera seria*), consisting of separate, self-contained musical movements (almost exclusively solo arias) connected by rapid musical speeches (*recitativo secco*) which pushed the plot forward (Kivy 2002, 164ff.).

Such a highly expressive style was strictly connected to the emergence of professional performers, whose first evidence is the institution of a prize in 449 BC for the best actor in the City Dionysia, the most important Athenian festival devoted to dramatic performances. These professionals gradually became virtuoso singers, who went on tour as distinguished protagonists: emblematic is the case of the professional actor Theodoros, the most famous tragic performer of the fourth century BC, who specialized in female roles of Sophoclean and Euripidean dramas (which had become repertoire plays in the late Classical period).

It was these actors themselves who contributed to the vast and rapid spread of the musical theatre outside Attica (though there is evidence attesting to the spread of interest in drama since the fifth century BC; see Taplin 1993, 2007), transforming it into an international genre that soon became the most popular kind of entertainment in the post-Classical history of musical performance.

Musical Performances between Greece and Rome

In the Hellenistic age, music was definitely put in the hands of experts and virtuosi. This phenomenon led to the constitution and spread of guilds of performers called "Artists of Dionysus" (*Dionysiakoi technitai*), active across and beyond Greece, which could offer not only musicians, poets, and actors, but also costume makers and trainers for any theatrical exhibition of the period.[12] The "stars" of these guilds were *tragōidoi* and *kōmōidoi*, traveling professional singers who could enjoy huge earnings and fame, honored by statues and civic rights in the cities where they performed. Often their exhibitions resembled concerts or recitals rather than complete theatrical productions, since (as far as we know) they seem to have included excerpts from famous dramas of the past instead of the performance of the complete ancient texts: in this new kind of show, some of the passages originally conceived for spoken delivery could be set to music, and sections that were originally choral be transferred to soloists (Gentili 1977).[13] As a consequence, the function of musical ingredients as a popular means of entertainment was gradually heightened, since theatrical performances no longer had to convey

the ethical values of the community but simply to amuse the new and more variegated audience, geographically widespread in a new globalized world.

The aesthetics typical of this modern "show business" found fertile ground in Rome, where it developed on an even larger scale. In Roman spectacles, the practice of turning musical performances into a show was often expanded, as in the *pompa triumphalis* (a religious and civic parade, accompanied by trumpeters, for the entry of the *vir triumphalis* into the city) or the *pompa funebris* (in honor of a deceased person of high rank, usually accompanied by several musical instruments, including brass).

The most spectacular forms of entertainment continued to be the theatrical, essentially performed during the *ludi* (lit., "games"), that is, religious festivities in honor of a god, a deceased personage, or a commemorative historical event (such as triumphs in war), which soon became the best means by which the empire could consolidate its political power and manipulate the masses, and were hence quite secularized occasions. Besides traditional tragedy and comedy, new theatrical genres emerged, which soon replaced the audience's preferences for the more conventional dramas based on Greek models (whose Roman adaptation, however, seems to have explored and expanded the musical potential of their Greek models: Plautus' *palliata* is a good example of this phenomenon; see Moore forthcoming). They were the genres of mime and pantomime, the popularity of which increased especially during the early empire.

While mime performance was at the beginning largely based on improvisation and became literary only later (featuring a high degree of realism, accomplished through the absence of theatrical masks and vivid dialogues among the actors, with the occasional presence of music and dance), the pantomime or *tragoedia saltata* offered the public something similar to modern ballet interpretation of serious drama. A solo actor and dancer (the *saltator* or *planipes*, lit. "who wears no shoes," in order to have greater freedom of movement), wearing a closed-mouth mask, mimed a mythical story playing "all" (*pantos*) the parts himself, supported by a chorus of singers and by a small orchestra of wind instruments (*aulos* and panpipes, a set of reed tubes bound together with wax) and percussion (among which there were: *kymbala*, i.e. small brass cymbals; sistra, consisting of handle and a U-shaped metal frame; the *kroupezion*, that is, a sandal with an iron sole used to mark time for the dance). In this kind of theatrical performance (which, though originating in Greece, flourished throughout the Roman Empire) the pivotal elements of *mimēsis* were essentially dance and bodily movements, no longer equally balanced with music and words, the three key elements of ancient *mousikē*, if we are to believe Libanius when he says that, in a pantomime performance, "dancing is not made complete by the songs, but it is for the sake of the dancing that the songs are worked out" (*Defence on Behalf of Dancers* 88, tr. Molloy 1996). In this show, the dance seems to have been

completely detached from the original ethical and religious values expressed by the ancient and illustrious *choreia*, especially in the opinion of those who judged the pantomime an emblematic expression of decadence, regarded as typical of the period:[14] this is clearly shown by the two rhetorical attempts of defending the pantomime in antiquity (Lucianus' *On Dance* and Libanius' *Defence on Behalf of Dancers*), which tried to connect its origin to the noble Greek tradition of the past.

In Roman culture, music also accompanied all the other spectacular entertainment of public games, including gladiator combats, whose typical musical instruments were loud trumpets (*tubae*), horns (*cornua*), and water organ (*hydraulis*): musicians accompanying gladiatorial games are often displayed on contemporary mosaics, like those from the seaside villa at Dar Buc Ammera in Libya. Besides this, kitharodic soloists (*citharoedi*) and histrionic singers of tragic songs (*tragoedi*) gained outstanding popularity among the masses, as the fascination of the emperor Nero (called *princeps citharoedus* by the poet Juvenal, *Satires* 8.198) for musical exhibitions clearly shows (Power 2010, 3ff.).

This aesthetics of "theatricalism", within which music played such an important part, was greatly promoted by the imperial power, chiefly for propagandistic purposes, and lasted for centuries (still in the fourth century AD, though disapproving them, Saint Augustine admitted the emotional mass reactions created by them in the audience; see *Confessions* 3.2), vividly shaping the modern image of Roman antiquity.[15]

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FURTHER READING

Scholarly publications on ancient Greek and Roman music have interestingly increased in recent years: a good introduction to the topic may be found in West (1992), Mathiesen (1999), Landels (2000), and Rocconi (2009). The most complete and up-to-date collection of extant melodies and fragments is Pöhlmann and West (2001). Theoretical texts on different scientific aspects of musical inquiry have become more widely known and read thanks to new recently available modern translations and comments: the best collection of texts is in Barker (1989), where the author translates and comments in English on all the relevant evidence on harmonic and acoustic sciences. More specific books on music theory are: Bélis (1986), Barker (2007), Hagel (2009), and Creese (2010) (on different aspects of harmonic science); Martinelli (2009) (where musical activities and philosophical reflections on music in the Hellenistic age are investigated); Pelosi (2010) (adopting an innovative approach to the study of the binomial of music and philosophy in Platonic writings); Huffmann (2011) (which collects the essays presented at the first international conference wholly devoted to the figure of Aristoxenus of Tarentum, the Peripatetic author traditionally regarded as the major musical authority of the ancient world). Recent bibliography on ancient Greek and Roman music is listed and discussed at http://www.moisasociety.org/de-musicis.

NOTES

1 On the topic see Abert (1899), Lippman (1964), Anderson (1966), Woerther (2008).

2 See, among the more recent bibliographic titles, Goldhill and Osborne (1999), Murray and Wilson (2004), Wilson (2007).

3 For a different opinion about the possibility that Alexandrian scholars had musical evidence of ancient poetry, see Fleming (1999). A strong attack on this position is in Prauscello (2006), esp. chapter 1.

4 All translations, unless otherwise stated, are from Barker (1984).

5 On musical *poikilia*, see Lascoux (2006), Wallace (2009).

6 That is to say, he seems to have first established the kitharodic *agon* attached to the festival of the Karneia and won it. For an attempt to evaluate Terpander's biographical tradition, not for the historical details it provides but mainly for extracting "the refractions of deeper and broader 'cultural truths' about the performance genre of *kitharōidia* as a whole," see Power (2010, 322ff).

7 Cf. Pindar *Encomion* 125; Strabo 13.2.4; Ps.-Plutarch, *On music* 1140f and 1132d.

8 Aulodic competitions were canceled in 582 BC, after having been introduced only a few years earlier (586 BC): "They also discontinued the singing to the *aulos*, because they deemed the music was inauspicious [*ouk euphēmon*; notice the peculiarity of this expression, a typical religious term]. For the tunes were most doleful, and the words sung to them were dirges" (Pausanias 10.7.4). West (1992, 337) does not believe that this would have been the true explanation for interrupting the aulodic contests at the Pythian games: nevertheless, such a remark is indicative of the need, in Greek opinion, for aesthetic glamour as an essential component for music devoted to the gods.

9 Pollux *Onomastikon* 4.66; Ps.-Plutarch *On music* 1133d–e, 1141b, and 1143b–c.

10 As Kivy (2002, 164ff.) points out, what gives absolute music its shape is the repeating of musical material, such as melodies, melodic fragments, and whole sections; narrative fiction, instead, is not cyclical but, rather, linear. Some ancient Greek poetic forms, however, could be very repetitive.

11 Nevertheless, we have to admit that, in the *Laws*, Plato clearly aspires to the "appropriateness" of the formal (that is, technical) aspects of music to the model of *mimēsis*, as, for instance, is the case concerning the unsuitable usage of rhythms proper to slaves and servile persons, when we are composing a melody which, instead, represents free men (cf. *Laws* 670c–d). But this is certainly not his main reason for rejecting dramatic poetry, and the *Laws* are primarily concerned with *choreia*.

12 Pickard-Cambridge (1968); Stefanis (1988); Le Guen (2001).

13 Our knowledge of these musical practices relies mostly on relatively recent papyrological discoveries (spanning from the third century BC to the third century AD), which show a variegated panorama of theatrical exhibitions in the Hellenistic and Roman times. On this, see especially Gammacurta

(2006) and Prauscello (2006).

14 The aesthetics of the period is so explained by Duncan (2006, 189): “the weight of mythology, literature, theatrical tradition, and history […] by the time of the early Empire was quite heavy. This weight produced a sense of aesthetic sophistication in audiences that used to be called ‘decadence’: a sense of having seen it all, a desire for novelty.”

15 Savarese (1996); Beacham (1999); Beacham and Dennard (2006).

CHAPTER 6
The Body, Human and Divine in Greek Sculpture

Rosemary Barrow

Art and Religion

"The world … of the Greeks is … the milieu in which beauty begins its true life … the milieu … generated by spiritual vision and transfigured by art … Art in Greece has become the supreme expression of the absolute, and Greek religion is the religion of art itself" (Hegel 1975, 437–438). Hegel's association of art, beauty, and divinity represents an essential first step toward an understanding of the way that the Greeks conceived and read their images. And while his preoccupation with art as intuitive expression of divine truth has long since been replaced by emphasis on social production, inseparability of ancient art and religion remains a premise of scholarship today. It was Gordon's (1979) discussion of religious context that helped to open up new avenues of research for classical art historians regarding the sacred nature of ancient images. Thus, Elsner (1996, 2007) points to the multiplicity of ancient viewing habits whereby spiritual and secular, public and private become seemingly interchangeable, while Tanner (2006) contends likewise that religious and political dynamics combine in the making of artistic meaning. Platt (2010) argues that even in Hellenistic Greece, an era widely associated with detached scholarship and refined connoisseurship, iconographical reception could coexist with religious value.

Given that much sculpture represents deities or quasi-divine heroic figures, it is not surprising that sculptural imagery is heavily invested with sacred meaning. The anthropomorphic basis of Greek religion demanded that the divine be visualized in human form, and so the body came to be the sculptor's main preoccupation. Hence embodied representations of gods and mortals are often interchangeable to modern eyes, and, without inscriptional evidence, assigning an identity to any statue can be a tricky business. But determining identity is not the same as identifying original meaning. To ascertain how the Greeks perceived and received their images we must piece together reactions from references in literary sources. Neer's (2010) textual analysis of Greek art focuses on the Greek term *thauma* or "wonder." In ancient sources, art works and artifacts are often described as *thaumata*, "marvels" or "wonders." Central to Neer's argument is a concept of "doubleness" whereby an object is both a material thing and an abstract concept. Related to doubleness is another Greek term that occurs in the ancient discussions of sources of aesthetic

wonder, *paralogismos* or "false inference." For Neer, the captivating nature of Greek statuary is in the interplay between surface and depth. The physical surface suggests completeness, and yet beneath lies the interior *ēthos* or character (Neer 2010, 5). In human terms, *kalos kagathos* designated the connection between *kalos* (physical beauty) and *agathos* (virtue), and in the same way a statue's *thauma* could herald both its surface qualities and the nature of the divine (or the divine-like) that it encapsulated.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the essential relationship between aesthetics and religion in Greek sculpture and to consider a cluster of questions surrounding the nature of divinity and representation. Is there a distinction between god and image? What is the difference between images of gods and humans? Is there an aesthetic separate from the purely religious dimensions of statuary? These questions will be considered with special reference to four examples of well-known sculptures of differing date and style: two female deities – the Peplos Kore and the Aphrodite of Cnidos – and two heroic male nudes – the Doryphoros and the Barberini faun – each of which is both particular and representative of its period and context.

The Peplos Kore and the Aphrodite of Cnidos

At 1.18 meters tall, the Peplos Kore (Acropolis Museum, Athens 679) is an under-life-size statue of a woman, belonging to the period 550 to 530 BC (Figure 6.1). Made of Parian marble, she is distinctive because of the unusually prominent traces of paint that remain on her face, hair, and drapery. She is missing only her left forearm and the lower right corner of her skirt, along with the forepart of her feet. She has a stylized face with protruding cheek bones and broad nose; her mouth is upturned to form a characteristic Archaic smile. Free-standing Archaic stone statues, usually carved out of a single block, functioned as cult statues, divine dedications, or grave memorials (D'Onofrio 1982). The main identifiable traits of male kouroi and female korai are (as here) frontal stiff position, symmetrical stylized face and body, and long braided hair. Gender difference is demarcated partly by nudity in men and drapery in women, partly by a convention whereby men assume a walking position and women stand with two feet together.

Figure 6.1 The Peplos Kore (Acropolis Museum, Athens 679). Hellner, Neg. D-DAI-ATH-Akropolis 2378.

Many scholars see korai as generic rather than individual. Osborne (1998a, 84) writes that "sculptors were never tempted to explore woman *as* woman,"

and suggests that the reluctance to show the female nude has little to do with propriety and is, rather, the result of a lack of artistic interest in the female body – which, in turn, reflects the sociocultural realities that women, having no independent place in society, must be conceived as extensions of male relatives: wives, daughters, mothers, aunts, and sisters. Conversely Stieber (2004) insists that korai do have individual identities, and interprets these sculptures in terms of a distinctive mimetic realism. Unlike the naturalism of Classical sculpture, the stylized aesthetic of Archaic statuary can be realistic without being naturalistic. Stieber rightly notes that no kore looks exactly like any other. The Peplos Kore has an animated face and engaging smile. Rather than being completely motionless, she moves her head slightly to the left, lifting her left shoulder and arm and moving her left leg. Rather than being completely angular, she has rounded breasts and right forearm; there is a fleshiness around her middle, above and below her belt, and a slight separation of the legs marked by a fold in her drapery. Despite these "realistic" details the Peplos Kore is in no sense naturalistic, and her stylization does not serve to differentiate her as woman or as goddess, but it does, instead, capture the essential idea of femininity.

Her modern name (Peplos Kore) derives from a heavy woolen garment gathered at the waist and pinned at the shoulders that she appears to wear over her *chitōn* (visible at her ankles). But many scholars have challenged the identification. Brinkmann's (2004, 53–59) examination of the statue's polychromy reveals that her garment – originally decorated with animals and horseman – is an *ependytēs*. As an Eastern garment of Babylonian origin associated with divinity (Miller 1989), the *ependytēs* suggests that this kore may be a goddess. The simplicity of her dress is at odds with the elaborate Ionic *himation* worn by many of her contemporaries who once stood on the Acropolis. For Ridgway (1977, 57) her dress is deliberately outdated: it singles her out from her setting and gives her an otherworldly quality, alluding to a *xoanon* or wooden cult image such as Athena's Palladion. Ridgway (1977, 59; 1990, 610) goes on to suggest that the Peplos Kore could equally be a representation of Artemis or Aphrodite. Brinkmann (2004) and Keesling (2003, 135–139) settle on Artemis, who, as the goddess of Brauron, had a sanctuary on the Acropolis. Such a reading is supported by small drill holes in the kore's right hand which could only have held a narrow cylindrical object like an arrow (with the missing left hand originally holding a bow). It is also prospectively relevant that the *ependytēs* or *chitōniskos* frequently occurs in later (fourth century) inventories of women's dedications to Artemis Brauronia as a highly decorated and costly garment (Miller 1989, 323–324); and that the Brauronian ritual involved the shedding of a saffron robe known as the *krokotos*, which might be connected with the yellow coloring of the upper section of the Peplos kore's drapery (Neer 2010, 120).

While some scholars have argued that the characteristic extended arm of the

korai has a human votary function (Osborne 1998a, 84), Keesling (2003, 144–161) maintains that the gesture indicates a divinity receiving offerings. In either case it acts as a form of communication; unlike kouroi who stand with arms by their sides and fists clenched, korai interact with their viewers (Steiner 2001, 236), blurring boundaries between statue and viewer, worshipper and deity. Osborne (1994) relates the bearing and receiving of gifts to the "role of women as objects of exchange" (91), where, in a competitive marriage market, women were possessors of not insignificant symbolic capital. Kouroi and korai also constitute statements by and about the aristocratic patrons who dedicated them, and thus encapsulate another type of symbolic capital. Embodying elite value and self-identity (Stewart 1986), statue types which do not distinguish bodily between human and divine associate aristocratic privilege with divinity (Tanner 2001, 264).

While the sexual connotations of the muscular chests and swelling thighs of Archaic kouroi have long been acknowledged, Steiner (2001, 234–238) suggests that korai too elicited erotic responses. Inscriptions accompanying statues often describe them as *agalmata*, objects of delight. Steiner (2001, 236) proposes that the source of delight is the surface decoration of painted clothing and jewelry. But their drapery also outlines their bodies, stretched tightly over breasts and buttocks. In line with his argument about doubleness, Neer (2010) understands the drapery of korai as highlighting the interplay between "surface and depth" and "seen and unseen" (112): it encourages *paralogismos* whereby the viewer is aware of the seen surface as the source of *thauma*, while also sensing the unseen depth that lies beneath it. In literal terms, what lies beneath drapery is the body, but drapery can also imply the divine presence that the statue holds within it.

At the same time, drapery hints at the sexual body as an "interior," this time an "interior that is figured as a place at once hidden and fertile" (Neer 2010, 121). Neer goes on to note that in the case of the Peplos Kore, her drapery parts at the navel to reveal "a teeming mass of creatures" (121). If she is indeed a representation of Artemis, the association with animals has a clear significance. Artemis is a virgin goddess whose chastity is fiercely guarded by the animal world: one recalls, for instance, the story of Actaeon who is killed by his own hunting dogs after glimpsing the goddess naked (Cal. *BP* 106ff., Dio. *Bibl*. 4.81.3–5). But, at the same time, Artemis is associated with fertility and childbirth and the interior animals here may point to both her traditional role as *potnia therōn* (mistress of the beasts) and the fertility of nature.

Even if it is uncertain whether korai, in general or in particular, represent women or goddesses, it seems safe to conclude that the Peplos Kore is a divinity, and most probably Artemis. On this reading, the sexuality of the statue is intriguing. Her animated face, her pert breasts, and her rounded waist and buttocks imply that beneath her drapery is a sexually desirable woman's body. Indeed the Peplos Kore's slight curves and her animation seem

sufficiently at odds with the stiffness of her drapery for Ridgway (1977) to suggest that she is not a statue of a goddess but a "statue of a statue" (56). How far then is this image detached from the god? Gordon (1979, 7–10) notes that Greek (and Roman) writers often make no distinction between god and image: representation "materializes the divine presence" (Schnapp 1988, 570), and thus negates any notion of distance between deity, statue or even "statue of a statue."

Vernant (1988) insists that the concept of the image only emerged in the Classical period with Archaic art functioning as a sign rather than a representation. If Archaic stylization conveyed an idea, Classical naturalism sought to show something of the reality of the human form, albeit in its ideal state. But if it is unclear whether stylized korai represent real women or goddesses, so a comparable set of issues arises in the naturalism of the fourth century BC. Praxiteles's Aphrodite of Cnidos (Roman copy after a Greek original, *c*.350 BC: Vatican Museum, Rome), the first recorded free-standing female nude, occupies a special place in the art historical canon as a site of aesthetic and erotic significance (Figure. 6.2). A woman's body has been aestheticized to form a harmonious whole comprising elongated proportions, small high breasts, and rounded stomach. Standing in elegant contrapposto, with the slant of the statue's hips contrasted with that of her shoulders, her body has a pronounced curve. The original Aphrodite, produced between the 360s and 340s BC, is lost: what survives is a number of Roman copies. Pliny the Elder, writing almost 300 years after her original production, describes the statue's provenance, location and reception:

Figure 6.2 The Aphrodite of Cnidos (Roman copy after a Greek original, *c*.350 BC: Vatican Museum, Rome). Museo Pio-Clementino.

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[Praxiteles] made two statues and offered them for sale at the same time; one of them was represented with the body draped, for which reason the people of Kos, whose choice it was (since he had put the same price on

> both), preferred it, judging this was the sober and proper thing to do. The people of Knidos bought the rejected one, the fame of which became immensely greater … [The] shrine is completely open, so that it is possible to observe the image of the goddess from every side … They say that a certain man was once overcome with love for the statue and that, after he had hidden himself [in the shrine] during the nighttime, he embraced it and that it bears a stain, an indication of his lust.
>
> (Pl. *N.H.* 36.20, tr. Pollitt 1990)

Pliny's description highlights significant issues concerning the Cnidia's nudity and erotic status. Rejection by the Greek island of Cos on the grounds of nudity suggests that Praxiteles did not receive a commission but produced cult statues for the open market. Nudity is thus shown to be a site of controversy, and understood to be such by the sculptor, who made two statues in the confident belief that even if his innovative nude were rejected, a clothed Aphrodite would find a buyer.

The ideal nature of the Cnidia's nude body underscores Aphrodite's divinity. The Greeks customarily assumed that gods and goddesses only reluctantly showed themselves to mortals (Steiner 2001, 80). This assumption is made explicit in a series of Hellenistic epigrams that represent Aphrodite as aware of Praxiteles's violation of the rules of divine viewing (Corso 2007, 10–12). Some of these epigrams associate the sculptor's gaze with mythological precedents – Paris, Anchises, Adonis – and suggest that he grants the viewer the look that is forbidden in Greek myth. However, as Havelock (1995, 30–31) points out, the crucial issue when mortals see immortals is not nudity but power. In the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, Anchises takes off Aphrodite's robes and (in ignorance of her divine identity) sees her naked body, but it is only when she is dressed again, after love-making, that beholding her divinity frightens him (181–186).

But the Cnidia's nudity in any case seems to signal her availability. The Pseudo-Lucian has two men extol the beauty of the statue from all angles when they notice a stain on the statue's thigh, high up between the back of her legs, and are told by a temple attendant about a young man, who, enamored of the Aphrodite, got himself locked into the temple at night (Luc., *Er.* 14). Like Pliny's young man, he is overcome with sexual desire, attempts to consummate his love, and ejaculates on the statue's marble surface. Other accounts, by Posidippus, Arnobius, and Valerius Maximus, also record male attempts to penetrate the statue (Corso 2007, 46–48), all confirming her realistic desirability.

The Cnidia belongs to an aesthetic category of ideal beauty, but a woman's body only becomes eligible for such a category through a system of measured proportion and symmetry. A man tries to have sex with the Cnidia as if she were a woman; yet she is not a woman, but a nude. Or not even a nude, as

understood in modern art-historical terms: the Cnidia is a cult statue in a religious setting. According to Havelock (1995), the later writings that relate to the sexual responses evoked by the statue are misleading: her original composition was probably "calculated not to invite lustful glances or bold approaches but rather to inspire religious awe" (36). The Cnidia's nudity, then, adds an extra dimension to her religio-erotic status. Friedrich (1978, 137–141) confers a liminal status on the mythological Aphrodite: she breaks boundaries between mortal and immortal by taking the mortal men Anchises and Adonis as lovers. And those same narratives show her transcending gender boundaries too, as she assumes the traditional role of the male god in pursuing her lovers. Then again, the Aphrodite statue's nudity even takes on a cross-gender significance in the light of the historical development of Greek sculpture. Before the fourth century it is only male subjects that are sculpted fully nude.

Here, though, there is a major complication. Unlike male nudes this statue's response to her own nudity appears to be one of self-conscious reserve: stooping, looking away, and moving her right hand in front of her genitals. The gesture, known as the pudica or modesty pose, is the subject of unresolved debate. For Blundell (1995, 194) and Salomon (1997, 208–210), it implies a narrative of female sexual vulnerability with viewer positioned as voyeur, while Osborne (1994, 81–86) also reads the Cnidia specifically in terms of male desire. All three agree in looking at the Aphrodite as a figure of ultimate passivity, aware of being seen and attempting to conceal herself from the male gaze.

An alternative reading of the pose is taken by Havelock (1995), who refers to the Pseudo-Lucian's *Erotes* as the only written account of the Cnidia's position in which she is described with one hand hiding her *aidos*. Havelock interprets this *aidos* not as shame but as "decorum, propriety and self-respecting modesty" (28). At the same time, the exposure of the female genitals can be understood, like its male equivalent, as apotropaic. Bonfante (1989) argues that the sight of female breasts and/or genitals in divine iconography "signifies fertility, fecundity and power" (545). Johns (1982, 72) argues similarly that although female genitals are rarely represented in plastic form in Greek (or Roman) culture, when the vulva *is* depicted, it can (like the phallus) connote power and good luck.

The dedication of votive models of body parts was common cult practice in fifth- and fourth-century mainland Greece. Among the body parts excavated are female breasts and vulvae (Dillon 2002, 29). In fifth-century vase painting a tradition of representing naked prostitutes on symposium vases involves use of a defined female anatomy. Praxiteles is said to have claimed that he modeled the Aphrodite on his lover, the hetaera Phryne (Ath. 13.591a), while other ancient evidence links the statue to a hetaera named Cratina (Posidippus, *Peri Knidou*, fr. 147). Although connections with named hetaerae may be

spurious (Havelock 1995, 4, 42–49), they would not have been inappropriate given that the goddess was actually patron of prostitutes. Thus the association with prostitution connects this Aphrodite with the sexualized nudity of vase paintings. For all that, difficulties remain. While a prostitute is readily penetrated, it remains the case that a statue of a goddess is not. She is literally impenetrable because she has no vagina, a significant fact pointed out by classical art historians like Smith (1991, 83),who tentatively suggests that such detail could have been excluded out of propriety. Strikingly, though, he says nothing about the divine status of the goddess.

Loraux (1992, 21) elucidates the differences between mortal and divine femininity by noting that in Greek myth, sexual unions between Aphrodite and mortal men are ultimately unsuccessful: Adonis is killed on a wild boar hunt and Anchises blinded or made lame by Zeus's thunderbolt. In the case of the Aphrodite of Cnidos, the possibility of intercourse, along with its attendant dangers, is removed. Accordingly, Stewart (1997, 104) and Hales (2002, 256) suggest that the Cnidia's lack of genitalia facilitates divine difference and allows her a status and power denied to mortal women. The Cnidia's nudity appears to make her available, but ultimately the statue is inaccessible, and the man who tries to have sex with her can only climax on her thigh. The statue's beautiful exterior allows her inner divinity to be imagined, but, like divinity itself, it can never be tangibly realized.

Polyclitus's Doryphoros and the Barberini Faun

Male statuary too posed questions about the relationship between gender and divinity. Polyclitus's Doryphoros (spear-bearer), a 2.042 meter bronze statue of a young man (Roman copy after a Greek original *c*.440s BC: Archaeological Museum, Naples), exemplified the sculptor's "canon," embodied in a written treatise on physical proportions. Looking to arithmetic and geometry as well as medical knowledge of human anatomy, the text is not extant and the sculpture itself only survives in marble Roman copies. Nevertheless, copies all display a muscular male nude standing in contrapposto (Figure 6.3). Slanting one way and the other, the figure is simultaneously relaxed and tensed, with the right arm resting and the left holding a spear. Conversely, it is the right leg that bears the weight of the body as the left trails behind. The head turns a little to the right, as the hips are twisted slightly in the opposite direction.

Figure 6.3 Polyclitus, Doryphoros (Roman copy after a Greek original *c*.440s BC: Archaeological Museum, Naples). Koppermann, Neg. D-DAI-ROM-66.1831.

While scholars explore the philosophical affinities of the Doryphoros in which the symmetrical body is linked to cosmic harmony, Pythgoras and Hippocratic medical writings (Leftwich 1995; Meyer 1995; Pollitt 1995), Tanner (2000) rightly point out that aesthetic responses were grounded in a social context where "art, athletics and military training flowed freely one into the other" (194). Though the statue was named "Achilles" by Friedrich Hauser in 1909 (Ridgway 1981, 202), his exact identity, along with function and location, are unknown, and our only real clue is to a general rather than a specific identity in the form of the spear that the Doryphoros originally held. This suggests that he is either a warrior carrying a spear for battle or an athlete carrying a javelin for competition (Osborne 2011, 42). Quintilian implies that his physique is "suitable for both the military and for the wrestling-court" (Quint., *Inst.* 5.12.21), and Stewart (1997) crowns him "the supreme embodiment of the warrior-athlete" (86). A martial identity, certainly, would legitimize display of the male body, in this case that of a finely toned and handsome citizen, poised to take up arms heroically in defense of his polis.

Aligned with warfare throughout antiquity was sport, and military training consisted of athletic exercise rather than combat-specific maneuvers (Van Wees 2007, 279). In Classical Greece, hoplites and athletes were associated with high status, because it was men of wealth and leisure that generally participated in war and sport. Property qualifications were a condition of eligibility for service in the Athenian hoplite militia; individuals had to provide their own arms and armor, while athletes needed to afford the time and expense of training and travel to competitions. A hoplite would use a spear in battle, and an athlete a javelin in competition. Within the elite pentathlon, the javelin and discus provided upper-body strength and allowed practice for launching a weapon in battle; the long jump and foot race tested speed and stamina; wrestling improved endurance.

As all-round athletes, pentathletes would have overall muscular development. Aristotle notes that in the most beautiful athlete no one part of the body should be emphasized over any other:

> In a young man, beauty is the possession of a body fit to endure the exertion of running and of contests of strength; which means that he is pleasant to look at; and therefore all-round athletes are the most beautiful, being naturally adapted for both contests of strength and for speed also.
>
> (Arist., *Rh.* 5.1361b. 3–12, tr. W.R. Roberts, Oxford, 1924)

Ancient sources testify to a tradition of athletes competing naked (Thuc. 1.6.5–5; Pl. *Rep*. 452c; Paus. 1.44.1–2) with nudity a distinguishing mark of Greekness. A familiar explanation of nudity in art is the indication of heroic or divine status, where, in an arena where physical perfection is privileged, a mortal man depicted nude can be credited with elevated strength and courage (Himmelmann 1990). But, as various scholars have argued, Greek nudity has

multiple functions, as an indicator of age and status, as a mark of vulnerability and defeat (Hurwit 2007), and also as a sign of sexual desirability (Osborne 1998b). An athlete's nudity, no doubt, would acknowledge the reality of competition, but also facilitate a bodily display that invoked the man's athletic capability as well as his desirability. Scanlon's (2002, 199–273) investigation into the place of eros in Greek athletics shows statues of the god of love presiding over gymnasia and palaestrae, with love and passion inspiring and rewarding competitors, and desire spurring on athletes to seek success and fame. The adjective *kalos* (beautiful) is attached to personal names in graffiti by athletes themselves in the entrance tunnel of the fourth-century stadium at Nemea (Birge, Miller, and Kraynak 2001, 84–89); awareness of athletic beauty clearly extended to the participants themselves.

From the end of the sixth century, victory statues were created to celebrate successful athletes, but none of these display specific athletic traits (Smith 2007, 108). A literary equivalent is found in Pindar, who stresses athletic *ponos* (labor) and *mochthos* (toil), but says little about the specifics of training or of the body types it produced. Osborne (2011, 30) uses this evidence to question the notion that sculpture represents bodies developed by a specific mode of athletic training and that musculature in sculpture derives from actual bodies witnessed training in the gymnasium. Conversely, Tanner (2000, 197) notes the connection between the vocabulary used of the actual male body and statuary: a bronze statue can be *liparos* (sleek and shiny) and *lampros* (gleaming, reflective of light), as can freshly oiled skin. But how far is the Doryphoros's body intended to convey that of a real man? Like a victory statue, is the Doryphoros a symbolic rather than an actual body?

Clairmont (1993, 158) still insists on the reality of the heroic nude, but much debate focuses on the discrepancy between real and ideal. Metraux's (1995, 25–29) examination of the relationship between medical knowledge and sculptural production concludes that there is no "matching up" of the actual body with its image. Stewart (2008, 16) goes further by estimating that, compared with sculptural examples, real Greek men were far shorter and smaller, with an average height of 5 ft 5 in and weighing only 139 lbs. Of the Doryphoros, Hurwit (2007, 54) suggests that his larger-than-life scale positions him as "suprahuman": his nudity is idealizing and heroizing, and if he is not a representation of Achilles then he is at least "Achillean." Other scholars interrogate the statue's bodily structure and proportion: Leftwich (1995, 47) notes that his legs are too far apart for normal walking and concludes that the figure does not imitate real life, while Hallett (1986, 82) points out that the pattern of muscles in the trunk – prominent pectorals, accentuated costal arch, exaggerated flank muscles – all enliven the central axis of the figure and contribute an ordered "architectural framework" rather than a realism to the whole figure.

The Doryphoros's muscles form an aesthetic rather than a biological pattern,

and, as Stewart argues (1997, 93–95) in his illuminating analysis of the statue, the fetishized nature of his muscularity signify *rhōmē* (strength) and *karteria* (endurance) and thus *andreia* (manliness). Here the streamlined, muscular, hard body becomes a fetishistic substitute for the phallus. As bodily proportions are mathematically calculated to produce a harmonious aesthetic whole rather than a realistic version of manhood, the sculptured penis itself is smaller than a typical biological equivalent. Characteristically, small penises in Greek iconography identify the positive quality of self-control in contrast to the uncivilized "other" depicted in numerous vase paintings of the ithyphallic followers of Dionysus and defeated foreign enemies. As Stewart notes, the combination of small penis and big body is significant, and the hard muscular (phallic) torso signifies the dominant power of patriarchy itself.

Visual manipulation, then, adjusts the actual human body, so that the Doryphoros becomes a cultural map upon which civic and military masculinity is displayed. But the question remains: is he a god, a hero, or an ideal version of an actual warrior-athlete? It maybe that no such distinctions were made by his original viewers. In terms of Neer's understanding of a statue's doubleness, surface excellence implies an important inner component, and in the Greek imagination the "physical" is intertwined with the "psychological" (Vernant 1988, 22). Hence the Greek phrase *kalos kagathos* naturally unites physical beauty with moral "perfection" and the Doryphoros depicts a spiritually as well as physically superior being – be he a deity, hero, or godlike man.

The Doryphoros is a fifth-century ideal. In the fourth century competing types of masculinity emerge, from ephebic slenderness to hypermuscular maturity (Osborne 1998b, 23–25). By the Hellenistic era multiple forms of representation expand not just gendered identity, but also style – baroque, rococo, and neoclassical. In this period, the aesthetic appeal of art works which look to satisfy personal taste becomes more marked. Even though public commissions remain within the realm of religious and civic service, the emergence of Hellenistic dynasties sees the creation of private palaces embellished with art collections.

Without find spots or inscriptions, it is difficult to ascertain the exact function and meaning of many Hellenistic sculptures. One such problematic example is the Barberini faun, a 2.15 meter sleeping satyr, found in Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome in the seventeenth century (circa third century BC: Glyptothek, Munich). Even the date of this sculpture remains unknown. Supported by a rocky seat covered with a panther skin, the faun, who is wreathed with ivy and grapes and may originally have held a wineskin (Ridgway 1990, 321), has fallen into a drunken sleep (Figure 6.4). The passivity, however, seems at odds with the hypermasculine presence of his heavily developed musculature. Represented as virtually human, this faun has only a horse's tail and pointed ear to betray his hybrid identity. In Archaic and Classical vase painting, satyrs

often feature as the mythological "other." In a constant state of intoxication and sexual arousal, they provide a foil to the mental and physical control of the idealized Greek self (Carpenter 1986; Hedreen 1992). Then again, the half-human, half-animal hybrid, characterized by a huge and erect phallus, is a comic figure. In Hellenistic sculpture satyrs are often paired with nymphs or hermaphrodites in s*ymplegmata* or erotic groups of followers of Dionysus – satyrs, maenads, and Pans – engaged in amorous tussles. In both vases and sculptural groups, satyrs are sexual predators, but here the faun is different. In contradiction to his usual role, this faun is the object of the erotic gaze (Smith 1991, 135).

Figure 6.4 Barberini faun (circa third century BC: Glyptothek, Munich).

Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München.

Photograph by Renate Kühling.

Sorabella (2007) questions “the strange incompatibility between the style and the iconography of the statue” (220). Without the snub nose, shaggy hair, or horse’s legs of other satyrs, the faun’s physique is distinctive, as is his lack of a sexual or drinking partner. At the same time, he exudes a powerful eroticism, with the vulnerability of sleep in juxtaposition with his massive and tensed muscles. He is an “anomaly:” “larger, grander, less active, and more seductive than any other satyr represented” (Sorabella 2007, 220).

The faun’s heavy musculature is associated stylistically with the Hellenistic baroque of the Pergamene School (later third and early second centuries BC), although scholars ascribe different dates to the statue itself. For Walter (1986, 91), he is a Hellenistic original, but for Smith (1991, 150), a Roman copy, while Ridgway (1990, 383–384) sees him as a Roman pastiche made in Pergamene style. Also characteristic of the sculpture of the School of Pergamon is the lack of one viewpoint: this is a many-sided composition (Sorabella 2007, 223). Zanker (2004) draws a parallel with literary *ekphrases*. Of the Barberini faun, he suggests that the viewer is encouraged to see him from different angles but ultimately to find the “major focal point” in the “genitals between the provocatively spread legs” (45).

With restored right leg and missing left arm, the pose has been the subject of debate. Although there are suggestions that the faun may have been made to lie flat on the ground, the carving of his back confirms that his current upright position is correct (Ridgway 1990, 315). One view is that the right foot should be placed farther from his torso to create a greater sense of rest (Walter 1993, 25–27), but in any case the boldly opened legs remain the same. Some scholars argue that the pose relates to the satyr’s hypersexualized nature. Onians (1999) sees his drunkenness and his exposed genitals as a sign of his animalism, whereby he is presented as the “antithesis of the erect and disciplined alertness that Greek athletic exercise was designed to produce” (140). Moreno (1994, 288) similarly reads him as displaying a lack of self-control. Both suggest that the faun holds some kind of moral message on the dangers of excess, but this reading is open to challenge. Surely his attractiveness and availability signal a positive rather than a negative meaning.

Original location is probably the most problematic of all the uncertainties surrounding the faun. Onians (1999, 140) visualizes him in a Pergamene gymnasium and Sorabella (2007), identifying him as the satyr from the myth of king Midas, places him in a Hellenistic palace as a political symbol. Holes under the panther skin show that he was once a fountain and, for Ridgway (1990, 321), his original function was as Roman water feature. Most plausibly, Pollitt (1986, 134) suggests that the statue was an offering in a

sanctuary, perhaps of Dionysus: an idea confirmed by Walter (1986, 119–120). If aesthetics are emancipated from the religious dimensions of statuary in the Hellenistic age, the process is never complete. Deriving as he does from the realm of Dionysus, the faun still evokes connections with the gods. Stähli (1999) argues that the Dionysiac subjects of Attic vase painting were translated into a more public art form for Hellenistic kings as a status symbol for those who could afford the luxuries associated with a lifestyle of feasting and drinking. But such a conclusion ignores the importance of Dionysiac worship in Hellenistic Egypt and Asia Minor.

As a mystery religion, the worship of Dionysus offered a personal dimension not available through the old polis cults, while political symbolism connected Alexander the Great directly with the god (Nilsson 1957). Ptolemaic rulers associated themselves with Alexander through the appropriation of Dionysus. Most famously, the third-century Grand Procession of Ptolemy II Philadelpus was dedicated to Dionysus, and, included in its parade was an 18-foot statue of the god, 500 girls, and 120 satyrs (Ath. 200e). A statue of a satyr, then, can claim a special religious significance in the Hellenistic world. And this statue's muscular physique and monumental size place him in the category of heroic representation. The theatrical style of Pergamene baroque was calculated to inspire *psychagōgia* or swaying of the soul (Stewart 2006, 171). The Barberini faun's exaggerated musculature and erotic positioning creates a powerful visual impression which can provoke a spiritual reaction in his viewer. A duality emerges if we see beneath his surface grandeur the otherworldly nature of the realm of divinity.

Human and Divine

While aesthetic style changes from Archaic stylization through Classical naturalism to Hellenistic exaggeration, the essential nexus of art and religion remains an important source of meaning for Greek sculpture. The *thauma* evoked by art works operates on the surface level of dazzling painted drapery (Peplos Kore), sensual curves (Cnidia), precise symmetry (Doryphoros), and inflated muscularity (Barberini faun), but in all of these examples the marble exterior implies a presence of divinity within.

If the Peplos Kore demonstrates the lack of distinction between statue and deity, then the Cnidia highlights the gulf between human and divine. Likewise, the Doryphoros encapsulates a god-like quality which distinguishes the figure from an ordinary man, while in the Barberini faun a man is again elevated to heroic status through his mythological identity. As Vernant (1991) argues, divine images were born out of tension between a desire to connect with the gods and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of such a connection: "The idea is to establish real contact with the world beyond, to actualize it, to make it present, and thereby to participate intimately in the

divine; yet by the same move, it must also emphasize what is inaccessible and mysterious in divinity, its alien quality, its otherness" (153). A statue may be able to represent a god in human form, but the distinction between human and divine is illustrated in the disparity between art and reality. Unlike a woman, a statue of a goddess cannot be penetrated, and a god-like man must be bigger, bolder, and better than his mortal equivalent.

For Hegel, Greek sculpture embodies divinity, but is limited in its projection of human subjectivity. "'A person's own subjective inwardness,' Hegel says, is 'not revealed in the sightless figure [of sculpture], nor can such a figure convey a concentrated expression of the inner life'" (Maker 2000, 63). It is precisely the divine essence of sculpture that makes Hegel doubt its humanity. And the Greeks' aestheticization of the body into something unrelatable to a "subjective" reality is closely related to their continuing sense of the objective reality of the divine, within and beneath the sculptural form. Not all Greek sculpture is religious, and not all Greek religion is expressed in sculpture, but the relation between aesthetics and religion, articulated through the body, at once human and divine, remains paramount.

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FURTHER READING

Platt and Squire (2010), a guest-edited volume of *Arethusa*, brings together a series of essays exploring how post-Enlightenment systems of aesthetics impact on our understanding of antique art and ponders ancient attitudes to these same art works. For a focus on religious context, in particular, chapter 2 of Elsner (2007), a collection of essays by a major scholar of Greco-Roman art, explores the ritual setting of religious Greek art in the context of Pausanias’s descriptions of art works and their surroundings. In a similar vein, Steiner (2001) uses textual descriptions to examine intellectual responses to sculpture and sites them as an integral part of Greek life.

Tanner (2001) explores the relationship between nature, culture, and society in cult statues of Archaic and Classical Greece and roots images within their religious contexts. Tanner (2006) extends this discussion to analyze the societal foundations of ancient art and foreground relationships between artists, patrons, and viewers. Neer (2010) is concerned with Archaic and Classical statuary and in tracing a continuity between the two styles; the book uses visual analysis and relationships with Greek textual sources to interrogate what the image means to the viewer.

A number of publications discuss the four statues: for full treatments see Keesling (2003) on the Peplos Kore, Havelock (1995) on the Cnidia, Moon (1995) on the Doryphoros, and Sorabella (2007) on the Barberini faun.

CHAPTER 7
Painting and Private Art Collections in Rome

Agnès Rouveret

Introduction

Inventing the Classical Model of Greek Painting

Up until the archaeological discoveries of the second half of the twentieth century, our vision of Greek painting, which had reached a kind of golden age between the Age of Pericles and the time of Alexander and his immediate successors, was largely based on indirect sources. Our appreciation of Greek paintings was greatly mediated by Roman wall-paintings, first discovered in Rome, then in the Vesuvian cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The paintings were particularly prized, especially when they could be related to long-lost ancient monuments and artists quoted in ancient sources. For example, during the Renaissance period, the fashion for "grotesques" arose following the discovery of the vaults of the Neronian *Domus Aurea*. The painting known as the "Aldobrandini wedding" (Nogara 1907), discovered in 1601, has been connected with Lucian's description of an ancient masterpiece by Aetion depicting the "wedding of Alexander and Roxana" (*Herodotus sive Aetion* 4–6; Pliny, *NH* 35.78). The discovery of Herculaneum and Pompeii considerably modifies the way these antique pictures were viewed. The paintings from these two modest cities, made famous by the disaster told by Pliny the Younger (*Epist*. 6.16), did not always correspond to the expectations of a well-read public, nurtured on classical references, and the discussions between art lovers and artists stirred up controversy concerning the worth and beauty of these paintings, as illustrated by the correspondence between Diderot and Falconet and the debate between Diderot and the Comte de Caylus. The travelers had a strong preference for small marble paintings (Bragantini and Sampaolo 2009, 117–119, 166–169) and for mosaics,[1] which gave the impression of providing faithful representations of the antique paintings themselves. The preference for mobile paintings that brought together antique and modern tastes, coupled with the technical problems of preserving painting in situ led those in charge of excavations to cut up the figural scenes and to insert them into frames (D'Alconzo 2002; Prisco 2009). They created art galleries of these individual pieces, artificially removed from walls of houses, and classified them according to genres whose existence is also attested in antiquity.

It is therefore legitimate to consider that the discovery of Greek painting belongs to the twentieth century. Excavations made at the beginning of the century, an excellent overview of which can be found in Adolphe Reinach's (1921) and Michael Rostovtzeff's (1914) works before World War I, were extended by the recent ones, which have dramatically increased our knowledge. Thanks to sophisticated methods for the analysis of materials and the numerical treatment of images, discoveries of the last couple of decades have considerably enriched our technical knowledge about the use of colors, shades, and tones, which gave paintings a vividness not seen before (Brecoulaki 2006; Rouveret 2012; Sassi in this volume). The striking power of *trompe-l'oeil* gave rise to several famous anecdotes that feed the rhetorical tradition up to modern times: Zeuxis, the child, the birds, the grapes, Parrhasius' curtain (Pliny, *NH* 35.65; Seneca the Elder, *Contr.* 10.5.27).

The renowned painters of antiquity put these techniques into use in a specific conception of image-making that developed in Athens in the fifth century BC and which contributed to defining the city as the School of Greece, thanks to its superiority in literary and artistic creation (Thuc. 2. 37; Plut. *Per.* 13. 4–5; *De Gloria Ath.*). Along with theater, visual arts were considered to contribute to the making of the citizen and one of the most accomplished expressions of such a conception is found in Aristotle's *Poetics*. The painter, like the playwright, he writes, depicts acting characters in order to provoke in the public the same desire to emulate and imitate as is produced in a theater. Painting is a factory of vivid images that trigger powerful emotions and the educated citizen should know how to control them in a rational way. Painting can therefore be seen to entertain a close relation with the arts of speech. This link is strongly emphasized in literary sources and gave to painting a privileged position among visual arts. Such a conception was to be amplified in the Renaissance period and it constituted one of the elements on which the myth of Athenian classicism was built.

This Athenian model will be taken up again and enriched with numerous metamorphoses in the new hegemonic poles, arising from Alexander the Great's conquests. But the ethical relation between the works and the public that was set up among Athenian citizens conveys an entirely different meaning when the pieces of art are part of a royal collection. The accumulation of art works, extracted from their initial context or commissioned to famous artists, contributed to the fame of artists or schools, such as that of Sicyon, in which Apelles and Lysippus received their training. The objects were collected both for their symbolic value and their artistic dimension. In Alexandria and Pergamon, they were integrated into more extended collections that combined natural marvels and libraries.

The First Historians of Greek Art and the New Posidippus

Out of this new artistic setting rose a new wave of autonomous art criticism at the beginning of the third century BC. Their approach was both classificatory and normative. The same interpretive grid of technical criteria founded on the expertise of craftsmen was applied to the analysis of preserved works, following a model of excellence that made it possible to rank and list the best artists. These first art critics, most notably the bronze sculptor Xenocrates of Athens, a disciple of Lysippus, the philosopher and sculptor from Pergamon Antigonus of Carystus, the historian and politician Duris of Samos, are quoted by Pliny the Elder among his sources. From these Plinian summaries, the *Quellenforschung* was in a position to trace back a set of criteria and classifications that could be attributed to these ancient treatises, which are present as palimpsests in Pliny's *Natural History* (Pollitt 1974 , 73–81; Schweitzer 1932; Rouveret 1989: 420–423; Dorandi 1999; Rouveret 2007b; Naas and Simon forthcoming).

A recent papyrological discovery, a collection of 112 epigrams attributed to Posidippus of Pella, a Greek poet present at the Lagid court in the second quarter of the third century BC, makes accessible a direct witness of the development of such an art criticism (Austin and Bastianini 2002; Gutzwiller 2005; Prioux 2007, 2008; Zanker in this volume). Two parts of the book are particularly significant, the *Lithika*, poems dedicated to gem stones, and *Andriantopoiika*, the section dedicated to bronze statues. The ongoing analysis of these new poems not only validates many essential points raised in Pliny's work, but it also allows us to make further observations. Posidippus' work, which illustrates a genre well suited to the comparison between art and texts, that of the epigram, which artists often used in order to sign their works, enables us to follow his artistic trends and preferences. He enhances the status of the Lysippean model, qualifying it as a new art with respect to the old-fashioned art of Archaic *colossoi* but also distinguishing it from the outmoded canon established by Polyclitus for the masculine body. He also shows admiration for other fifth-century artists, in particular Myron for his animal art, and claims his commitment to a form of extreme realism, including ugliness (in his epigram about the portrait of the poet Philitas of Cos). Posidippus therefore puts forward a different vision of the Athenian classical model, which gives a more complex view of what was previously known before from Callimachus' and Theocritus' literary manifestoes. But his judgments also allow a better appreciation of the difference in attitude toward these aesthetic classifications between the Greek critics and the later Roman versions (Linant de Bellefonds, Prioux, and Rouveret forthcoming).

Triumph and Collections of Greek Art in Rome

It is therefore possible to make more systematic use of the comparison between the Roman works and their Hellenistic antecedents. Even though this patient work of rereading and comparing sources is far from complete, we are

now in a position to mark out in more detail the stages in the evolution of the appreciation of Greek art, from the conquest of Greece to the formation of the large imperial collections. The difference lies partly in the fact that the Rome that conquered Greece and brought down the kingdoms formed from Alexander's conquest, one after the other up until the fall of Alexandria after Actium, was a republic, and not a kingdom. The Roman discourse on images, although directed toward the elites, proposes a different reading than the one generated by the art of the court found in Hellenistic kingdoms. Thus, following Aemilius Paulus' victory over Perseus, the last king of Macedonia, at Pydna, the consul accomplishes two symbolic gestures intended to manifest his preference for the Athenian cultural model over that of Hellenistic monarchies and at the same time his respect toward the gods and ancestral customs. He goes to Olympia to see Phidias' colossal statue of Zeus, which he considers to be in accordance with the majesty of the king of gods as described by Homer (Livy 45.28; Polybius 30.10.6; Plut. *Aem*. 28). He also asks the Athenians to send him a painter to design his victory ceremony and to educate his children (Pliny, *NH* 35.135; Plut. *Aem*. 6.8). They chose the painter and philosopher Metrodorus of Athens whose status was similar to that of the Greek sculptors of the middle of the second century BC, who were recognized by Pliny (*NH* 34.52) as the artists of a "rebirth of art" (*reuixit ars*) (Coarelli 1996). It can be seen that Paulus Aemilius' behavior focuses on the greatness and the majesty bestowed upon the colossal sacred statue via the artist's excellence and puts painting in an instrumental position, in accordance with the Roman practice of triumph. It is well known that the vast majority of the works of art, gathered in public collections, reached Rome with the conquering armies as spoils of war, first from South Italy and Sicily, then extensively with the conquest of the eastern part of the Mediterranean (Ferrary 1988: 537–588; Beard 2007; Bravi 2012; Rutledge 2012).

In his short history of Roman painting (*NH* 35.17–28), Pliny establishes a sharp break at the fall and destruction of Corinth by Mummius in 146 BC. Before this event, the paintings, which depicted battles and portraits, were commissioned by the victorious generals (*uiri triumphales*), and the art of painting could even be practiced by men of good birth like Fabius Pictor (Pliny, *NH* 35.19; Val. Max. 8.14.6; Dion.Hal. *Ant. Rom*. 16.3.6; Cic. *Tusc.* 1.2.4). During this first period, extending from the end of the fourth century BC to the middle of the third, Pliny recognizes two ways of celebrating the memory of the great families: the paintings are first produced inside the temples, and then mobile paintings are set up in public buildings (*NH* 35.22).

The new attitude exemplified by Mummius consisted of publicly enhancing the status accorded to "foreign pictures" (the term they used to signify the paintings of Greek masters). According to an anecdote, he took Aristides' painting figuring Dionysus from King Attalus, who had paid an enormous price at the auction sale, and consecrated it in the temple of Ceres on the

Aventine (Pliny, *NH* 35.24 and 99; Strabo 8.6.23; Pausanias 7.16. 7–8). Similar to a Homeric gift ennobled by its multiple possessors and its elaborate history, the painting by Aristides of Thebes brings with it a Greek past which combines the memory of the cities with the memory of Alexander and Hellenistic kings who present themselves as *Neoi Dionysoi*. But its insertion into the Temple of Ceres transformed it into an emblem of and a monument to Roman victory. Pliny the Elder uses Mummius, Caesar, and Augustus as exempla to illustrate the proper handling of foreign collections. The history of the reception of Greek masterpieces in Roman public places culminates in the collections gathered in the *Templum Pacis*, which metaphorically came to represent domination of the *oikoumenē* (the inhabited world) by Rome, which was even considered as the eighth marvel in the world. Flavius Josephus' description of the procession that marks Vespasian's and Titus' triumph over Judaea, in which the historian notes that the *Templum Pacis* hosts the "ancient masterpieces of painting and sculpture" (*BJ* 7.5.158–160), may be seen as an equivalent to the Plinian catalogues. The Greek masterpieces (Bravi 2009), abridged images of *Graecia capta*, form part of an enormous collection of art works inserted into public spaces, together with the Egyptian obelisks, the polychrome marbles, and exotic natural curiosities. Paintings are no longer an omnipresent model of reference, but a component, albeit valued, of a vast and ecclectic whole (Naas 2002; Carey 2003). The *Templum Pacis* therefore appears as the outcome of a program initiated at the end of the Republican period, when the sculptor Pasiteles, a contemporary of Pompey, wrote a treatise about the famous art works in the world (Pliny, *NH* 36.39: *opera nobilia in toto orbe*) (Tanner 2006: 289–292; De Angelis 2008).

If we consider the famous paintings, a simple comparison between the localization of the works quoted by Cicero in his fourth *actio* against Verres in 70 BC and their mention in the Plinian excursus in 77 AD shows that a larger number of art works were transferred to ornament the monuments of the Vrbs (Rouveret 2007a). But what appears to be the result of a public program did not come about without discussion and debates, which are attested in many sources from the first century BC. They gave rise to a strong theorizing effort by the authors of this period, Cicero in particular, concerning private collections of art, which were considered a luxury and an immoderate form of pleasure, and which, in contrast to public collections, were highly disapproved of (*Pro Murena* 76.4). Private collections were nevertheless acquired due to the fact that the generals were allowed to take part of the *spolia* from their military victory for private use. Through the development of a huge market for the production and purchase of Greek sculptures and paintings, and also for replicas of famous works of art, extraordinary private collections were accumulated and used as an element of prestige, a token of sociability, and a matter of competition between the members of the Roman aristocracy (Robert 2005). Among the most famous private collections were the Lucullan collections of books and works of art.[2] The exchange of letters

between Cicero and Atticus gives a precious glimpse into the psychology and the tastes of the collectors (*Att*. 1.4.3, 1.9.2, 1.10.3, 2.3.2; *Quint*. 3.1.5; *Fam.* 7.23). As a reaction to this increasing accumulation of works of art in private locations, Latin sources insist upon the development of public monuments dedicated to culture and the visual arts. There is a clear connection with the struggle for power and popularity, as shown by the building policy in the Campus Martius: Pompey's theater and its huge *porticus post scaenam* (Sauron 1994, 249–314) and the collections of works of art and public libraries supported by Julius Caesar and later by Augustus and his family (the *Saepta*, the *Porticus Octaviae*, Agrippa's *Thermae*) (Zanker 1990, 139–145; Coarelli 1997, 539–590). This attitude can be seen in the speech delivered by Agrippa in favor of public collections of statues and paintings (Pliny, *NH* 35.26: *de tabulis omnibus signisque publicandis*), a much wiser choice according to Pliny than "consigning them to exile in our country houses." Pliny also remarks that the collections of objects often mirror their collector's own character. This is clear, for example, in Asinius Pollio's magnificent collection of Hellenistic art, reflecting his eagerness and impetuosity (Pliny, *NH* 36.33: *acris vehementia*).[3]

Roman Collections and Aesthetics: The Theme of the Picture Gallery

But, in this global perspective, are the Roman collections of Greek masterpieces merely a demonstration of pride of Roman victory over the *oikoumenē*? Or are they simply one element in the ethical debate about the correct way to deal with Greek culture? Is there a way to get a better understanding of the aesthetic impact of the Greek masterpieces brought to Rome? Do we find a reflection of the Greek judgments elaborated about them in the Hellenistic period? Since archaeological data on the monuments and the works mentioned in the written sources is relatively scarce, compared to the abundance of information known about the Greek way of living in the houses and villas of Rome and Campania, can we use this documentation to explore the topic of this chapter?

The theme of the picture gallery is therefore particularly interesting. Collections of paintings, referred to as *pinacothecae*, a calque of the Greek *pinacothēkai*, occur in the vast majority of Latin texts dealing with the luxury of private life, together with similarly derived terms, but they are rarely present in Greek sources (Rouveret 2007a). The theme of the collection allows us to examine in more detail the relations of paintings to their viewers, which is paramount to the evaluation of art work in the Hellenistic tradition and has been present in literary sources since the Classical period (Zeitlin 1994). This implication of the viewer relies on a literary device built upon the mimetic effect of details taken from everyday life in the artistic representation. It is used to demonstrate the contrast between the "naïve" and the "knowing"

eye (Goldhill 1994) and also occurs in Latin poetry where it sometimes takes the form of a dialogue between slave and master, such as the one between Horace and Davus (*Sat*. 2.7.95).

Literary works also provide us with an example of the importance placed on the Aristotelian view mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, whereby raw emotions should be kept in check by rational control. This distance from moving representations was seen to be obtained by verbal expression and learned commentary, which enabled the viewer to better *understand* the image, an attitude which was still present in Philostratus' collection of *ekphraseis* at the beginning of the third century. Two texts in particular, *Aeneid* 1. 453–497 (Farrell 2012), and its parody in chapters 83–90 from the *Satyricon* (Elsner 2007, 177–199), demonstrate this point. In the first book of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas reaches the precinct of the temple that Dido is building for Iuno in Carthage and contemplates the paintings showing episodes of the *Iliad*. In the *Satyricon*, Encolpius, who has lost his beloved Giton, meets the poet Eumolpus while visiting a *pinacotheca*, set near a temple, probably in Naples. In both cases, the viewer describes the art work for the reader and the author represents his character's emotions via the set of images he is looking at.

Aeneas, the perfect hero, is described as a connoisseur in artistic matters. His description of the *Iliaka*[4] does not follow the Homeric order which is observed, for example, in the *Tabulae Iliacae* (Squire 2011). It reflects his own judgment of the unfair defeat of the Trojans and the death of innocents. Aeneas's gaze focuses upon Achilles, the only agent of the Greek victory. In this confrontation between *ēthē* and *pathē*, the climax is reached when Aeneas discovers his own portrait and pulls himself together while contemplating his own glory. Aeneas's reaction exactly corresponds to the mechanism of triumphal representations and genealogical portraits mentioned earlier. But the weakness introduced by the emotional disposition of the hero turns to erotic desire when he sees Penthesilea leading the troop of Amazons, her naked breast underlined by her golden girdle (*Aen*. 1.490–493). Virgil lingers on the emotion raised by this erotic gaze which immediately precedes the apparition of Dido among a group of young men. And the temporary weakness in the self-control of Aeneas, seduced by the beauty of the nude female body, opens the way to the love at first sight and the tragic affair with the queen.[5]

When entering the *pinacotheca*, Encolpus is full of wrath, erotic desire, and frustration. Being a student, his first attempt is to show off his expertise in the aesthetic commentary on the ancient masterpieces, but his discourse about the famous painters of the Golden Age is a play on words as empty and inaccurate as Trimalchio's speeches. The text is built on a comparison between different types of boards (*tabulae*) – the tablet for the accounts, the board to play on, and the painted panel. This comparison, which already features in earlier

chapters of the novel (*Sat.* 33.76.80), is reminiscent of the anecdote about the fall of Corinth in 146 BC, when the Roman soldiers used Greek masterpieces as boards for playing games (Strabo 8.6.23). Encolpius' gaze focuses on the mythological representations which show the homoerotic loves of the gods. He is not interested, as Aeneas was, by the heroic theme of the *Iliupersis*, even if the fall of Troy is commented upon by Eumolpus, at the end of the episode. In the meantime, a lesson of art history had taken place between the two protagonists. Its content allows us to link once again the Hellenistic tradition with the later developments of the Second Sophistic. Two questions are raised by Encolpus: the chronology of the paintings and the subject of the representations. The setting is similar to the one evoked by Philostratus in the prologue of the *Eikones*. The first question gives some further clues about the reception of Hellenistic treatises about art in Rome, and the connections with Posidippus's epigrams are evident. This point, as far as I know, has not been raised in the previous commentaries about this passage. The main issues they tackle show that the *Satyricon* is perfectly coherent with this particular trend of art history, dating from the beginning of the Hellenistic period.

It is worth noticing, finally, how superior the glory of the public image is among the hierarchy of figurative arts. In the next section, I'll follow the theme of the collection in domestic decorations, but it must be kept in mind that it is part of a system in which public traditions weigh heavily.

The Evidence from Domestic Wall-Painting in Rome and in the Vesuvian Cities

The paintings mentioned in the written sources are lost, a situation which strongly differs from that of statues, which can be studied thanks to the numerous copies that were made for the Roman market (Marvin 2008). Looking at the way in which the studies on Roman painting have been constructed, it may be reasonable to consider that the central topic, almost the backbone of the state of the art, has been to determine whether or not the wall paintings inform us about the famous *tabulae* and the collections in which they can be found (Ling 1991, 128–135; Bergmann 1995; Baldassarre *et al.* 2002, 160–166; Croisille 2005, 23, 169–192; Wyler 2006; Marvin 2008, 194–205; Squire 2012).

A New Taste in the Painted trompe-l'oeil Architectures

A central piece in this argument is based on the comparison between the archaeological data and the polemical passage from Vitruvius' *De Architectura* 7. 5.1–4, on the basis of which August Mau (1882) developed his classification of the so-called four Styles of Pompeian wall-painting. The text, written around 30 BC, corresponds to the last phase of the Second Style,

according to H.G. Beyen's typology (1938 and 1960), and marks a crucial turn in the decorative patterns of domestic wall-painting. Vitruvius is primarily looking for a decoration compatible with the buildings they adorn and mainly orients his criticism toward the correct imitation of architectures, which is prominent in the Second Style, but his developments also provide us with very clear indications on the progressive insertion of complex figured scenes into this setting. In praise of the traditional way of decorating the walls, he describes two main themes: the painting of elements of landscape (*topia*), which are presented as a collection of different views, congruent with the architectural frame of the *ambulatio*, and, in "a few places" (*nonnullis locis*), "large size figural paintings" (*signorum megalographiam*) showing images of gods or representations of myths as well as epic themes, such as "the battles of Troy" (*Troianas pugnas*) and the "wanderings of Odysseus through landscapes" (*Vlixis errationes per topia*). On the negative side, Vitruvius insists upon the unnatural hybridization of the decorative patterns where vegetal and floral motifs are mixed in with human and animal bodies (Sauron 1994, 492–497).

The way Vitruvius' passage is constructed confirms that the analysis of the architectural frame and that of figural elements embedded in it go hand in hand in his critical evaluation. For this reason, I have centered my inquiry not only on the themes represented, which could be associated with the art of collecting, but also on the whole decorative setting and most of all on the interplay between them. I have applied to both issues some of the main criteria used by Hellenistic critics in stylistic and generic classification: greatness and majesty (*megethos*, *maiestas*), slenderness and lightness (*leptotēs*, *tenuitas*), extreme precision and accuracy (*acribeia*), all characteristics of Alexandrian aesthetics which had a strong impact on the Latin poets of the first century BC, from Catullus and his friends to the Augustan poets. It seems to me that these criteria lead us to a better understanding of the mural painting of the first century BC and to a new rhetorical interpretation of their evolution from the Second to the Third Style. (It should be noted that August Mau's classification of Roman wall painting is a typology and not a definition of styles based on aesthetical criteria. This point is important to get a clear view of the scope of the following analysis.) Vitruvius, it should be emphasized, builds up his demonstration against the new decorative fashion applying the rhetorical definition of the genres (*genera*) and the hierarchy between them to the description of domestic *ornatus*.

The central point in my argumentation is that the wall decoration from the last phase of the Second Style until the new trend of the Third Style, which characterizes the Augustan period, can be interpreted along the lines of the well-known rhetorical distinction between the high style (*genus grande*) and the subtle, light, and slender style (*genus tenue*) (Cic. *Orat*. 20–21). In the last

phase of the Second Style, two correlated phenomena are often observed: while the complex figured scenes play a greater part, the architectural frame becomes thinner, evolving toward a kind of mannerism and baroque complexity which alters the legibility of the motifs. The Third Style, on the contrary establishes a new hierarchy based on the disposition of large monochromatic panels divided by very thin and delicate decorations and slender columns and candelabra. This general setting emphasizes the visibility of figural paintings which are set in the central part of the wall. Usually this new fashion is characterized by a lack of interest in the simulation of depth, the effect of which is to "close the wall." But I would suggest that the taste for the small and the delicate patterns is almost as important to the definition of this new style. It could be considered as the figurative equivalent of the poetical lightness (*leptotēs*) and of the thin and slender style (*genus tenue*) used by the orators in causes that pertain to everyday life (Cic. *De Orat*. 3.177; *Fam*. 9.21.1). Furthermore, a close attention to Vitruvius' text shows that the rhetoric of slenderness, based on the fashion of tender and supple vegetal ornaments instead of a solid architectural frame, is also present in his appreciation of the new trends.

In order to grasp the impact of the collections of ancient paintings on these figurative patterns in the wall-paintings from the middle of the first century BC and the Augustan period, I will take three examples. Two of them, the Boscoreale villa and the domus from the Esquiline display decors that were stored away after their composition as if they were a particularly important testimony of the past (Ehrhardt 2012). The Farnesina villa (Bragantini and De Vos 1982), are tightly linked to the circle of the imperial family, and the theme of the collection asserts itself as a plain decorative element in the cubiculum B which will be studied in the last part of this chapter.

The Role of Landscape: Toward a Representation of Intimacy

The Boscoreale villa has been recently submitted to a vast and careful study after the restoration of the main parts of the original ensemble whose various components are exhibited in several museums in different countries (Barbet and Verbanck-Piérard 2013). Since its discovery in 1901, the decoration of the villa has been considered as an exemplary case for its large-scale paintings (*megalographia*) and scenographic paintings (*scaenographia*). In both cases, the opposition between *megethos* and *leptotēs*, the search for *acribeia*, and the play on the inversion of scales are at work, in particular for the insertion of the figurative elements. In the *megalographia* painted in Room H, the architectural frame emphasizes the majesty of the life-size figures including divinities (such as the prominent image of Venus) on the rear wall, and on the left and right sides, portraits of historical figures and personifications whose precise identities are still controversial (Sauron 2013). The figures present in

the paintings are contained within a fictive portico, which accentuates the greatness of public architecture (Figure 7.1). From the fifth century BC, the Painted Stoa (*Stoa Poikilē*) in the Athenian agora represents a model for the display of exemplary paintings in the civic space (Paus. *Per*.1.15–16). The emphasis on public greatness also explains why the porticus is the place par excellence for orators, poets, and philosophers to comment upon the representations they show to the public, in real life and in fiction, as we discussed above.

Figure 7.1 Boscoreale, Villa of P. Fannius Synistor, *Oecus* H, west wall, Naples, National Archaeological Museum, inv. s.n.5. With permission of the Ministero dei beni e delle attivita culturali e del turismo – Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli.

In the painted porticoes from Boscoreale, the columns in the foreground still have their handling bosses. This detail reveals their temporary setting and can be interpreted as an allusion to the scaffoldings used for triumphal celebrations and temporary theaters. The recent discoveries from Macedonia facilitate a close comparison of the figurative styles and allow us to interpret the paintings from Room H as a kind of "pastiche" or "citation" of aulic paintings whose prestige is emphasized by this antique style. The inversion of scales is also present in the miniaturized images painted on small panels (*pinakes*), realistically represented with their wooden frame and their shutters, which are set on the upper fictive cornice. These objects adorned with figural patterns have a literary correspondent in the poetical use of *ekphraseis* developed by contemporary poets who claim their allegiance to Alexandrian models (see for example, Catullus' *Carmen* 64). The villa hosts further examples of this playful inversion of scale. This witty search for

miniaturization shows the expertise of the painter in the mimetic expression of small and variegated details. But it is also a conscious play on the inversion of the pictorial genre, for example in the hunting scene painted in a very small scale above the central door, whereas the same motif appears in grand style on the facade of the Vergina tomb (Bragantini 2013). The same holds true for the inversion of scales that characterizes the collection of scenographic views painted in the small cubiculum M of the villa. Yet one element introduces a strong break in this illusionistic play: the window of the rear wall of the alcova in cubiculum M looks out onto the real landscape dominated by Vesuvius. The richly adorned columns of the fictitious portico open onto a garden with a grotto and a sacred fountain. Through the succession of painted panels and motifs (the *topia* of the city on the yellow parapet, the "guest-gifts" [*xenia*] painted in the transparent bowl), the *trompe-l'oeil* architecture organizes, in the privacy of the bedroom, the confrontation between leisure (*otium*) and activity (*negotium*), between nature and luxury, a tension which is at the core of the bucolic and elegiac poetry.

It may be concluded that the cubiculum M illustrates an intermediate stage where the play with the figurative codes corresponds to the Hellenistic taste for the inversion and the interaction between the genres, whereas the creation of a setting adapted to a form of intimacy is still linked to the urban realities via the metaphor of the theater and the theme of the *topia*. Looking at the genre, we could find its nearest equivalent in the Ciceronian definitions of the rhetoric of styles where the greatness of the *genus grande* is transformed into a more subtle and delicate style, a kind of "middle style" (*genus medium*) which corresponds to the orator's conception of *otium cum dignitate* ("leisure with dignity") (Rouveret 2013).

Looking at the Past with Odysseus

However, the painting of landscapes may also be used to establish a kind of complicity and proximity between the viewer of the first century BC and his most remote past. The best example is found in the Odyssean frescoes discovered in 1848 on the Esquiline Hill, which illustrate the "wanderings of Odysseus through landscapes" (Biering 1995). The remaining fragments of the Odyssey frieze were painted onto the upper part of the wall of a large room, as a set of views seen through a fictitious row of pillars, emphasized by the shadow they cast. They illustrate four episodes told by Odysseus at the court of the Phaeacians (*Od*. 10.80–132, 187–574, 11.23–640, 12.165–200). In contrast with the vivid frame, the misty and wild landscape, in which the adventures of the hero take place, is built on a background of soft and blurred patches of blue, gray, green, and brown, heightened by the bright yellow of a few natural elements and the lively colors of the protagonists. Via this fictive scenery, the spectator is taken back to the time of Odysseus, almost as if he

took the mask and the voice of the hero when he tells his adventures in the western lands. The painted landscape, which gives a formal unity to the succession of Homeric episodes, brilliantly imitates the real mechanism of perception, since the dividing pillars partially conceal the figured scenes, which are supposedly taking place behind them. This astute device is reminiscent of the Vitruvian remark on the respect of natural laws in the art works made in conformity with the laws of imitation.

The figure of "the wandering Odysseus" becomes a model for the traveler (merchant or soldier) going to exotic places, far away from home, and this motif may be seen as reflecting, within the domestic sphere, the large opening of the known world brought by the expansion of the empire. But it also expresses the nostalgia for homeland and his familiar landscape, which is a constant feature of the Homeric hero longing to come back to Ithaca (Rouveret 2013).

Other examples confirm this ambivalence in the representations of landscape in domestic decoration, of which the Esquiline frieze probably gives the most accomplished expression, and allows us to delineate the evolution of the theme itself, which gave rise to an innovative way for wall-paintings. This invention was attributed to Studius, a Roman painter in the Augustan period, one of the few Roman artists mentioned in the *Natural History* (35.116–117). The Plinian notice is the only one in book 35, which gives a full description of his works. Even if the landscape painted in the hunting scene from Vergina confirms the existence of such representations in Classical and Hellenistic Greek art, a fact which invalidates F. Wickhoff's hypothesis (1895) about the Roman origin of the genre, the paramount importance of the representation of landscapes in Roman art and literature is abundantly documented both in the public and the private spheres (Gazda and Haeckl 2010). There is no doubt that the period we are focusing on represents a turning point in this evolution.

In accordance with Pliny's text, the most elaborate examples of the genre are observed at the end of the Second Style and the beginning of the Third Style, first in the Roman Farnesina villa (around 20 BC) possibly belonging to Agrippa and Julia, the daughter of Augustus, and, a decade later, in the Vesuvian villa from Boscotrecase which was a property of the imperial family.

Augustan Innovation: From the Farnesina Villa to Boscotrecase

Landscapes are presented in different ways and places in the Farnesina villa. I will focus on the white corridor F–G (Bragantini and De Vos 1982 , 337–376), which displays a full range of innovative ways of representing the many different types of *topia*, which could feature "any scene that took the fancy" (*qualia quis optaret*) of the patrons. Painted on a neutral white ground that

emphasizes the multifarious activities followed by the tiny and sketchy figures, the landscape is still framed by a portico but instead of a solid and vivid architecture, delicate and thin candelabra with a vegetal base are painted in the foreground (Figure 7.2). They are crowned by slender caryatids holding fragile garlands. Stemming from the headdress of the Caryatids, small columns, whose capitals support the epistyle, introduce a clear division between the motifs figured on the frieze. The architectural model is still present, but the "slimming cure," if one may say so, applied to the whole decoration, the predominance of lighter and softer tones contrasting with the polychromatic and florid palette we had seen at Boscoreale, all these elements break up the architectural *trompe-l'oeil* effects, introducing a new and subtle hierarchy and harmony between the different parts of the wall which appears as a flat surface. The decoration of the F–G corridor respects the Vitruvian recommendation for placing the "variety of *topia*" in the promenades, but the new way of building up the decorative frame transforms the view on a continuous landscape into a set of different views, each one centered on a typical activity, which alternate with another set of still-life representations featuring theatrical masks, associated with other objects emblematically linked to musical and poetical genres, to cult practices, and entertainment. In short, the two sets of motifs form a collection and their almost musical composition is strongly reminiscent of the various ways of living. The theme is predominant in Horace's poems and played in different keys according to the poetical genres. We are also reminded of a biographical detail in Augustus' life (Suetonius, *Aug*. 98) commented upon by A. Wallace-Hadrill. The old emperor at the end of his life used to give to his friends "small presents, including togas and *pallia*, setting the condition that the Romans should both dress and speak in Greek, and the Greeks in Roman clothes and language" (Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 38–41). The long-lasting metaphor of human life as a play performed on stage, which was exemplified in the cubiculum from Boscoreale via the collection of *trompe-l'oeil* panels derived from the temporary theaters is now expressed in a more intimate setting. They offer to the viewer a set of "ready-made" *topia*, in which the slow rhythm of the pastoral landscape contrasts with the frenzied activity of the harbor or the turmoil of a naval battle, two motifs which have been interpreted, with good arguments (Moreno 1999), as figuring real landscapes, the harbor of Corinth and the battle of Naulocha, during the civil wars.

Figure 7.2 Rome, Farnesina Villa, detail from corridor F, view of a harbor, National Museum of the Terme, inv. 1233. With permission of the Ministero dei beni e delle attivita culturali e del turismo – Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

The Farnesina villa brings another element to this cross-examination of text and images linked to the transformation from the Second to the Third Style. In the alcove of bedroom B a collection of fictitious panels (*pinakes*) evokes the setting of a picture gallery, analogous to the arrangement of the votive images set inside a shrine (Bragantini and De Vos 1982, 128–187). This is a new aspect. For instance, the *pinakes* from the great hall of the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii illustrate different themes and genres of painting but their style is basically similar (Baldassarre *et al.* 2002, 108–113). In the rear wall of the alcove of bedroom B, on the contrary, the painter has used different styles for his fictitious paintings and introduced a hierarchy between the representations accentuated by the composition of their frames (Figure 7.3). In the center of the wall, the main scene, emphasized by a finely decorated three-dimensional niche, features Ino-Leucothea, whose Roman *pendant* is Mater Matuta, nursing the infant Dionysos after the death of his mother Semele. Technically executed in the polychromatic style inherited from the Classical tradition, the picture illustrates a typical Hellenistic way of transferring the representation of the young god into a familiar setting, inspired by female activities (visiting shrines, nursing babies). In the

Augustan context, the allusion to female fertility, associated with the cult of Mater Matuta, is linked to the low rate of birth among the Roman contemporary elites leading to laws that were issued in order to improve the situation.

Figure 7.3 Rome, Farnesina Villa, bedroom B, back wall, National Museum of the Terme inv.1118. With permission of the Ministero dei beni e delle attivita culturali e del turismo – Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

The content of the two smaller *pinake*s, which stand on each side of the main panel, continues with the theme of life and education according to the Greek style, *paideia* and *mousikē*. The simplicity of the paintings based on a prominent outline of the figures delineated on a white background is enhanced by the manner of the support and the vivid colors of the frame, which enlighten the vermilion background of the wall. The pillar with figures on it is known in written sources as a *stylopinakion* and is present in several votive

reliefs or wall paintings featuring gardens. In the cubiculum B, the columns are crowned by a Siren raising the golden frame in her hands, another allusion to the musical themes that are represented on the *pinakes* themselves. They are painted with a few colors on a white background, in a way that is reminiscent of the Classical Attic white *lekythoi* and of the paintings on marble discovered at Herculaneum. The two scenes show the musical education of a young girl and their simple and plain, almost linear (*graphikos*) style has a rhetorical correspondent in the literary Attic style (as opposed to Asianism). Interestingly enough, the way of evoking Attic style, as it appears on the contrasting panels from the Farnesina villa, does not correspond to the description of Classical painting which is found in the first Hellenistic treatises, written in the first half of the third century BC. As we have seen, their judgments magnified the "invention" of light and shades, based on the fascinating power of color and not only on the perfect mastering of the line. Looking at the kaleidoscopic composition of colored panels, on which the decoration of the two cubicula A and B from the Farnesina villa relies, one may wonder if the wall paintings provide some evidence for a kind of Roman construction of Attic style, which could be added to other testimonies in art and text, such as the alleged lack of blue, which has still a long-lasting effect on the history of colors in Classical Greece.

In the villa from Boscotrecase, the last step toward the Third Style is accomplished and has been abundantly commented upon. In order to stick to my main argument, the collections of paintings and the prominent part played by landscape motifs in the expression of the self, I will briefly examine the two famous mythological landscapes from Room 19, painted at the center of the red panels, featuring Polyphemus and Galatea on the west wall (Figure 7.4), Perseus and Andromeda on the opposite wall (von Blanckenhagen and Alexander 1990). The panels, via an expert use of color which is reminiscent of some aspects of the Odyssean friezes from the Esquiline, present two love affairs in one landscape setting. Compared with the mythological panel-pictures painted some 20 years before in the House of Livia on the Palatine, the way in which the landscape is represented is completely different (Ling 1991, 113–115, fig. 113; Bergmann 1992). The Polyphemus and Galatea panel-picture in the House of Livia is still built on the Hellenistic tradition of the contrasting scales between the Nereid and the gigantic Cyclops featured in the central part of the picture in a marine setting, where the space is clearly divided into three parts: besides the central part, the seashore with a rustic altar in the foreground and the rocky island with a big tree in the background. The perfect fusion in the scales of representation which is evident at Boscotrecase relies on the prominent part played by the landscape, cast in a blue-green hue and in a new vertical composition, in which the main part of the story appears in the foreground dominated by a rocky outcropping, whereas the successive episodes are set in a hazy background. The unity of the representation is enhanced by the choice of a particular type of landscape

as a metaphor of the literary tradition to which each image is connected. Polyphemus and Galatea are placed in a pastoral landscape, whereas the epic is present in the background, where the blind Polyphemus is throwing rocks on Odysseus's ship. The story of Perseus and Andromeda is linked again to Neptune and the revenge of the Nereids offended by Andromeda's mother, Cassiope. The treatment of this dramatic story, which resolves itself in a love affair, evoked by the meeting between Perseus and Cepheus, Andromeda's father, painted in the background, suggests a comparison with the poetical genres favored by the Romans, notably elegy, and anticipates Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as well as Greek and Roman novels.

Figure 7.4 Boscotrecase Villa, Room 19, west wall, central panel: Polyphemus and Galatea. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.192.17).

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Conclusion

To sum up, one could give a definition of the Third Style as it is observed in the Boscotrecase villa as the creation of a full aesthetics of intimacy, completely separated from the monumental high style used in the public space. We now find a solution to the latent conflict between majesty and slenderness, which is present in the Vitruvian polemical excursus on wall-painting. In this new fashion of wall-decoration, the transposition of the myth in the pastoral landscape is particularly important. It is worth noting that this setting used for Greek legends and myths is present in the only representation of the origins of Rome attested in a Pompeian context, in the *triclinium* of M. Fabius Secundus' House (35–45 AD) (Bragantini and Sampaolo 2009 , 348–349), the best parallel for which is to be found in the fourth book of Propertius' *Elegies*. In these poems, the poet's *recusationes* for not writing epics in the name of the "delicate Muse" are not the product of a reluctance toward Augustan programs, but come from the willingness to naturalize the court poetry developed at Alexandria around Callimachus and Philitas into a poetry suiting the *princeps*' close friends, a poetry of intimacy relying on grace and slenderness. The Third Style's decoration that we can see in the imperial villa of Boscotrecase is the figurative equivalent of this new trend. It shows the high level of urban culture achieved in Rome at the end of the first century. The larger diffusion of these new representations made at the highest level of the command (imperial family) that we can observe in Rome and in the Vesuvian cities shows how the new imagery thus created brings together memories from the past, exotic evocations of the recently conquered lands, and allusive performance of ritual acts of worship and sacrifice, in order to inscribe the praise of the new imperial power into the everyday life of the common citizen.

Latin sources, from Cicero to Pliny the Elder, provide solid evidence that the public collections of art works contribute to the prestige of the city which is aiming at universal domination. They also underline the fact that the appropriation of Greek artistic skills, masterpieces, and critical judgments about them and their use to Rome's own ends produced an aesthetic value achieving a mediation between everyday experiences of common people and the elite's connoisseurship and discussions about art (*Tusc.* 5.102). The study of material culture sharpens our understanding of the production and use of art works publicly and in the private sphere. If one shifts from a production to a reception perspective, the question is whether it can also shed light on some aspects of the aesthetic experiences which result from this political and sociological context. We have tried to answer this question by examining a privileged case of comparison between art and text, the *pinacotheca*, whether real or fictitious. But the inquiry is all the more difficult in that the very notion of aesthetics cannot be confined to a strict definition, contrary to what was the case from the eighteenth century onward. In Classical antiquity, the reflection

on this topic is much more diffuse, but exists nevertheless. The written sources, which are particularly abundant in the period taken into consideration, give an incentive to pursue this difficult, but real dialogue between words and images. Classical painting, the topic of a famous aphorism by Horace, lends itself particularly well to this type of analysis. In one of his letters, Cicero reveals that he is particularly charmed by the little pictures (*tabellae*) he would like to get for his villa in Tusculum (*Fam*. 7, 23.3). The subtle thoughts he develops on the art of the metaphor (*translatio*) in rhetorical practice (*De orat*. 3.155–161) may be the best incentive to carry on this investigation on the value and ranking of art works within the trophies of Rome (Pliny, *NH* 36.101).

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FURTHER READING

Recent syntheses provide precise overviews of the public collections in Rome:

see Marvin (2008), Rutledge (2012), Bravi (2012). Also important are the studies on Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*: see Naas (2002), Carey (2003), Gibson and Morello (2011). The great part of the major literary sources are collected and translated in Reinach (1921), Becatti (1951), Pollitt (1983). On the critical literature about art, the key volume is Pollitt (1974); Tanner (2006) provides remarkably new insights on the theme we are dealing with. On private collections, there have been relatively few syntheses in recent times, except Bounia (2004), the collective volume *Il collezionismo nel mondo romano*, and Robert's (2005) original essay.

The studies on Roman painting are numerous and reviewing them far exceeds the limits of this chapter. The question of the relation between Greek masterpieces and Roman copies is not considered a central issue anymore (Ling 1991, 134–135), as compared to the contextual analysis of the domestic decorations, on which *PPM* (1990–2003) is essential reading. For the collections in Naples, see Bragantini and Sampaolo (2009). Hellenistic discoveries open up new perspectives on the way to think about how Roman wall paintings dealt with earlier Greek models: see Baldassarre *et al.* (2002) and on the interpretation of fictitious *pinacothecae*, see Prioux (2008). For different conclusions, Squire (2012). The synthesis proposed here relies on works centered on the relations that establish themselves between the viewer and the domestic context. On specific topics (pictures, *scaenographia*, landscapes), see among others Leach (1988), Rouveret (1989), Bergmann (1994, 1999), Sauron (1994, 2009), Elsner (2007), Barbet and Verbanck-Piérard (2013), and references therein.

NOTES

1 About the mosaic the House of the Faun, see Goethe's letter to W. Zahn, March 10, 1832.

2 See also M. Aemilius Scaurus (Pliny *NH*. 36. 5–6), and Hortensius: painting featuring the Argonauts (Pliny *NH* 35. 130).

3 The Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum (linked to the Epicurean circle of the *Calpurnii Pisones*) offers the best parallel in archaeological context: see Sauron (2009, 96–104) and Guidobaldi and Esposito (2012, 89–117).

4 A theme well documented in wall-painting: Rouveret (1989, 327–328, 358); Squire (2011, 7–77, 145–147).

5 On erotics and the representation of the nude body, see Robert (1992), Zanker (1999, 44–46), Bartman (2002: "sexy boys").

CHAPTER 8
Architecture and Society

Catherine Saliou

Toward the end of the fifth century BC, at the beginning of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides writes:

> … If the city of the Lacaedaemonians should be deserted and nothing should be left of it but its temples and the foundations of its other buildings, posterity would, I think, after a long lapse of time, be very loath to believe that their power was as great as their renown. […]. As the city is not compactly built and has not provided itself with magnificent temples and other edifices, but is inhabited village-fashion in the old Hellenic style, its power would be appear less than it is. Whereas, if Athens should suffer the same fate, its power would, I think, from what appeared of the city's ruins, be conjectured double what it is.
>
> (Thuc. 1.10.2, tr. Foster Smith).

In a critical and ironic tone, Thucydides points out the close link existing between architecture and power, and the importance of architecture in the self-representation of communities. During the eight centuries between the beginning of the fourth century BC and the end of the fourth century AD, the city is the most important form of collective organization. A city (*polis*/*ciuitas*) is a political community, unified by a shared citizenship and a collective identity, established on a delineated territory, and ruled by its own magistrates, with the assistance of a local council. The existence of a city implies the existence of at least one agglomeration (*asty*/*urbs*), with citizens' meeting places, the council-house and so on. The significance of the architectural features in the definition of the civic character of an agglomeration and, by inference, of the community of its inhabitants, is underlined by Pausanias in the second century AD. Pausanias, speaking of Panopeus, a little city in Greece, comments: "if one can call a city a place which possesses no government offices, no gymnasium, no theatre, no market-place, no water fountain" (Pausanias 10.4.1). The importance and the long duration of civic organization do not exclude diversity and evolution. During the period studied (4th century BC to 4th century AD), large kingdoms and empires emerge and dominate the Mediterranean world. The Hellenistic kingdoms appear after the conquests of Alexander the Great (d.323 BC): the Seleucid kingdom which extends through Levant, Anatolia, and Central Asia, the Lagid kingdom, whose heart is in Egypt, and later the Attalid kingdom, centered on Pergamon. The expansion of the Roman Empire begins under the Roman Republic. Octavian, Julius Caesar's adoptive son, is renamed

Augustus by the senate in 27 BC. This event is a good chronological landmark between the Republic and "Principate" or "imperial regime." Octavian/Augustus establishes the territorial continuity of the Roman Empire around the Mediterranean Sea. After his death a long, relatively peaceful and certainly prosperous time begins. However, the political unity of the Roman world breaks down at the end of the fourth century AD, with the splitting of the Roman Empire into a Western part and an Eastern part. As the city is the basic unit of the territorial organization of these empires, their expansion implies the diffusion of the civic model in the countries where such organization was previously unknown (such as in Western Europe and Africa). However, in an imperial context, the city is not a sovereign entity anymore, but remains an autonomous community, under the more or less close supervision of the delegates of the imperial state.

The aim of this chapter is first to look into the social and political mechanisms of public and private building, and thereafter to investigate the part played by shared notions of "architectural beauty" in these mechanisms and in the conceptions of urban landscapes. The main sources are literary and juridical texts, papyrological documents, and thousands of inscriptions written mainly in Latin or Greek throughout the Mediterranean world.

Building, Public and Private

In a Classical or Hellenistic Greek city, the decision to undertake a public building project, like the choice of the architect and the financing, is normally made by the civic council and the assembly of the citizens. The work is entrusted to a private contractor (e.g. Hellmann 1999, nos. 7–16). A commission of officials supervises the building or maintenance operations and must deliver an account of the expenses (e.g. Hellmann 1999, nos. 17–23).

In Rome, during the Republic, the censors are the officials chiefly responsible for public building, the main function of the aediles being maintenance. However, other magistrates or special commissionners may be concerned with public works, especially in the case of new temples. The magistrates let building and maintenance contracts by public auction. The Senate votes the funds, except in the case of buildings paid for from the spoils of a campaign. Some buildings are associated with the names of their founders – for example, the *basilica Aemilia* – and sons can perform the dedication of the buildings begun by their fathers. Temples and other buildings are a visible symbol of victory, power, and fame and play the role of memorials to distinguished men and their families. Public building and urbanism become tools in the contest for supremacy, until Augustus, with relatives or friends, takes the control of all public works (Strong 1968; Anderson 1997, 75–88; about temple foundations in the mid-republican period, Ziolkowski 1992, 193–234). In the cities of Roman Republican Italy, local magistrates have the duty to supervise

the works undertaken at the expense of the community, such as new buildings and restorations, temples, baths, and fortifications. They act on behalf of the community, after a decree by the local council. They give contracts to builders, follow and approve the work (e.g. in Latium and Campania, see Cébeillac-Gervasoni 1998, 81–84).

In the cities of the Roman Empire, except for Rome, public buildings remain a civic concern during imperial times. Principles of organization inherited from the Hellenistic or Republican period remain in use and extend to the cities newly founded or reorganized on a "Greek" or "Roman" model. Generally speaking, the operations are entrusted to special commissioners, who are members of the local elite and may be magistrates or priests. The labor is let to private contractors. From the third century onward, the law states that supervision of public works and material provision is part of the compulsory duties performed by all the members of local councils *(Digest*, hereafter *D.* 50.4.4. pr.). This duty doesn't imply that the councillors must pay. It may be a "personal duty," demanding just time and energy (*D.* 50. 4.18.10).

According to Aristotle, the magistrates of an oligarchic city have to build at their own expense in order to maintain their power (*Pol.* 6. 7.1321a). One of the most important social phenomena in the Hellenistic and Roman time is euergetism. Euergetism is the practice of wealthy or high-status individuals distributing a part of their wealth to the community (Veyne 1976). This benefaction may take the form of buildings or contributions to a building. More ambigous are the votive offerings, which may take the form of altars, tripods or aedicula, or real temples. These offerings testify to the relationship between an individual and a divinity, but the result is an enhancement of the urban environment (such as the Street of the Tripods in Athens) or even a new religious building, for the use and benefit of the community (for the Classical Greek world, see Umholtz 2002, 279–282; for mid-Republican Rome, see Ziolkowski 1992, 235–260). As the role of magistrate is performed by the wealthy citizens, euergetes and magistrates belong, in most cases, to the same class of the local society. A euergete is often also, at the same time, in charge of a magistracy (e.g. in Latium and Campania in the Republican period, Cébeillac-Gervasoni 1998, 105–133). In some cases the dedicatory inscriptions mention a decision of the local council: in these cases, although the funds are private, the initiative is, or seems to be, public (Pobjoy 2000). However, in the strictest sense, euergetism is not only privately funded but also undertaken by personal initiative. In the Augustan period, the individual initiatives of private benefaction begin to increase.

In the various parts of the Roman world, the rate of public building and the exact role played by euergetes in this evolution are multifarious, and disparities and local nuances are emphasized in recent research: the choices and goals of euergetes are not the same in Timgad and in Thugga, two cities of Africa Proconsularis, or in Ephesos, Pergamon, and Aphrodisias in Asia,

and the case of the Hauran is also different (Halfmann 2001; Briand-Ponsart 2003; Pont 2008; Sartre-Fauriat 1999). However, it is possible to sketch a typology of the forms of "building euergetism." Some acts of private benefaction may be undertaken by Roman citizens of senatorial or equestrian rank who, as such, belong to the "imperial elite," whose cultural and social interests embrace the entire empire. We may assume that they are in the best position to diffuse architectural trends and fashions throughout the Roman world. The members of local political and social elites (councillors, local priests, magistrates, and their families) have the moral and political duty, in order to maintain their position, to demonstrate their love of their city and public welfare through buildings. Euergetism may also be a way, for a rich freedman, to show his will and capacity to play a role in the civic society (e.g. *ILS* 5918a, Caere, Etruria, AD 113). Common people may also act as benefactors, through subscriptions or through segmented building operations: it was not uncommon to build or pay for two intercolumniations or even one column in a portico (Robert 1937: 526–527; Rumscheid 1999; Sartre-Fauriat 1999: 227–228; Pont 2010: 185).

According to Aristotle, building is a typical tyrant's activity. The reason for such undertakings is to preserve his power by producing constant occupation and poverty among the subject people (*Pol.* 5. 11, 1313 b). For different reasons, the inclination to build is also typical for the Hellenistic kings. The sovereign must be a founder of cities: in the Roman time, Alexandrer of Macedon was credited with the foundation of 70 cities. In Vitruvius' *De Architectura*, he appears in this role, explaining to the architect Deinocrates the conditions required to build a city (2. pr. 1–4). And it is true that at least some of the numerous cities named after him have been founded by him, first of all Alexandria ad Aegyptum (Fraser 1996). Alexander's successors, and especially the Seleucid kings, are also "founders" or "re-founders" of cities, and all Hellenistic kings have the wish to act as benefactors toward the cities inside and outside their kingdom (Bringmann and von Steuben 1995–2000). In 300–299 BC, Antiochos, son of Seleucos I, gives the city of Miletos a large portico. The revenues produced by this portico, which include shops, will be used for the embellishment of Apollo's sanctuary (Bringmann and von Steuben 1995–2000: I, 338–343, no. 281). Antiochos IV Epiphanes (175–164/3) pursues the building of the temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens (Liv. 46, 20). The Attalid kings not only adorn their capital, Pergamon, but give two porticoes to Athens (the Stoa of Attalus, on the Agora, and Eumenes' Stoa, near the theatre). The building activity of Octavian/Augustus endorses both this tradition of royal euergetism and the ideology of building, which, as we saw, was typical for the last two centuries of the republic. Vitruvius' treatise on architecture is dedicated to Augustus, because, as Vitruvius writes, he has "taken in hand […] the development of public buildings so that not only the state is enriched, thanks to [him], with new provinces, but also the majesty of its power is already being demonstrated by the extraordinary

prestige of its public buildings" (1. pr. 2–3, tr. Schofield). Like Augustus, his successors must also act as the benefactors of the whole empire and promote the prestige of Rome through constructions. Rome, as capital of the Roman Empire and residency of the emperor, lies under a specific regime. Public building and the management of public and sacred spaces are in the hands of the imperial administration, and after Augustus' death the only possible euergete is the emperor himself. In Italy and the provinces, the modalities, extent, and implications of imperial interventions are various and difficult to estimate globally (Horster 1997, 2001; on Hadrian's case, Boatwright 2000).

In the provinces, the Roman state is represented by the governor, appointed by the Senate or by the emperor. As the city is the basic unit of the territorial and fiscal organization of the empire, and as the prosperity of the empire depends on the prosperity of cities, the governor has the duty to look after the financial policy of the cities. Public building is the most important civic occasional expenditure. Therefore, governors may have to intervene in civic building. These interventions increase progressively during the Principate. Pliny the Younger, governor in Pontus-Bithynia in AD 111–113, specially appointed by the emperor with instructions to investigate and reform the public finances of the cities, must control the accounts relating to the construction of a new aqueduct and a gymnasium in Nicaea, and of a bath in Claudiopolis/ Bithynion. This financial task leads him to scrutinize the projects themselves and the processes of building (*ep.* 10. 37–40, see also *ep.* 10. 17b). Some interventions of the governor are the consequence of his jurisdictional activity (*ep.* 10. 82). Sometimes the approval of the governor is required before the beginning of a new project (Dio Chr. *Or*. 40.6). According to the jurist Æmilius Macer, who writes in the second century, the approval of the emperor, through the governor, is required for any new building at public expense (*D*. 50. 10. 3. 1; *D*. 50. 10. 6). The need for imperial authorization is explained by a desire to prevent the raising of local taxes or the diversion of existing revenues from their purpose. On the other hand, in an inscription from Callatis (Moesia), the governor is said to have supervised fund raising for the reconstruction of the remparts (*IScM* III 97, AD 172). The development of building eurgetism may be a consequence of the increasing financial control exercised by the imperial state over the cities. Indeed, for a building paid for with private funds, no authorization is required, unless the new building "pertains to rivalry with another city" (see below), or could provide the basis for rioting, or is an entertainment building (*D*. 50. 10. 3. pr.). Although in most cases the activity of the representative of the central power seems confined to financial survey and the granting of authorization, more direct involvement in the project is also attested. The governor may give the order to build or repair something (*I. Ephesos* 412, AD 79/81), or take part in the elaboration or supervision of a project (Plin. *ep.* 10. 70, Prusa, AD 112, for a bath; *SEG* 18. 740, Cyrene, AD 165/169, for cisterns). In an inscription from Rapidum (Mauretania Caesariensis), the governor is credited with having

“helped” the city (*CIL* 8. 20834, for a city wall). Some large-scale projects, exceeding the capacities and interests of a single city, are also directly in the hands of the governor and the state (e.g. Plin. *ep.* 10. 41–42). According to a rhetorical handbook of the third or fourth century, the orator who has the task of praising a governor must investigate “his attitude towards construction and public buildings” (Menander II, p. 389, l. 5–6 Spengel). The role of the governor increases in the fourth century

The role of private building in the fabric of urban space, or more generally of living spaces, should not be underestimated. During all this period there is a private market for construction. In the Roman world, especially in Rome or later also in Ostia, private urban building may be an investment, a source for future income through the revenues of rented apartments or economic spaces such baths or shops (Dubouloz 2011).

The first and specific task of the architect is to design and plan the future building, that is, to conceive the project and to estimate the cost. According to Vitruvius, the architect must be a well-educated man, with encyclopedic knowledge (1. 1). At least from the second century onward, architects are agents of the cultural unification of the Mediterranean world: Antiochos IV, who has been educated in Rome, entrusted the building of the temple to Olympian Zeus at Athens to an architect named Cossutius, who was a Roman citizen. On the other hand, the most famous architect in Rome in the middle of the second century, Hermodoros of Salamis, comes from Cyprus (Anderson 1997, 17–23, with sources and bibliography). At a lower level, numerous architects, of various status and origins, often foreigners, freedmen, or slaves, are known from Cicero and from epigraphic sources. Cicero shows theses architects as working for private patrons, and highly valued for their skill (Anderson 1997, 32–39). Knowledge and capacity define the good architect during all the period under consideration. Imperial legislation of the first half of the fourth century aims to increase the number of well-trained architects (*Codex Theodosianus*, hereafter *CTh* 13. 14. 1 [337], and grants fiscal exemptions to architects who devote themselves to teaching (*CTh* 13. 14. 3 [344]).

Architecture is an art, that is, a practice defined by formal rules, transmitted by education, and which may be divulged to the layman through treatises like Vitruvius’ *De Architectura*. However, in the realization of the project, the most important part is played by building contractors. Vitruvius makes a clear distinction between contractors and architects (1. 1. 10). The contractors are businessmen, who may keep a permanent labor force (slaves or free workers) as part of their business or may hire workers as they need them and may also entrust some part of the works to subcontractors. During the imperial period, they specialize increasingly, at least in Rome and in Italy. A contractor may also be an architect, but it is not necessarily the case. The Roman jurists of the imperial period investigate the multiple and multifarious contractual

relationships induced by the building process (Martin 1989; Saliou 2012).

It is not easy to delineate the roles of the patron, the architect, and the contractors in the decision processes involved in building. According to Vitruvius, the patron has just to provide the funds, whereas the elegance of the building and the skilfullness of the work depend on the architectect and the master mason (6. 8. 9). But Cicero, for example, supervised very carefully the process of construction. This care implies interest and knowledge. Moreover, Vitruvius wrote his treatise not for his colleagues, but for laymen who have to make strategic choices for themselves or take part in the supervision of public building to fulfill their civic duties or act as euergetes. In fact, some aristocrats are able to design buildings: according to Cassius Dio, the emperor Hadrian would have offered advice to Apollodorus of Damascus on the design of Trajan's forum in Rome, and designed the temple of Venus and Rome erected in Rome (Cassius Dio, 69. 4). In the fourth century, Gregory, bishop of Nyssa (Cappadocia), describes very accurately the martyrion he is planning, in order that his correspondent Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, can evaluate the size of the building and the quantity of work and send enough workers to him (*ep.* 25). It implies that both bishops have a certain amount of knowledge about architecture and the art of building. Architecture seems to have been part of the culture of the elite, and architectural skill may even have been a prerequisite to act as member of the elite.

At this point, we may conclude that public building is and remains, during the whole period, of civic concern. Even if financial control increases and even if some decisions taken in the cities must be agreed to by the emperor or his representatives, the principal agents of public building are the local elite, acting as councillors, magistrates, or euergetes. The rules of architecture should be relatively well diffused amongst the elite. We must now ask the question if architectural beauty, as such, and whatever defines it, is an important matter for individuals and communities.

From Architectural to Civic Beauty

The use of architectural beauty as paradigm for other arts, like poetry (Pind. *Ol.* 6. 1 3, cf. below) or rhetoric (cf. Cic. *de or*. 3. 180 ; Tac., *de or*. 22), shows the existence of architectural aesthetics. At first glance, the Greek sanctuary would seem to have played an important part in the development of the notion of architectural beauty. One of the most ancient dedicatory inscriptions of a building, carved on the step of the temple of Apollo in Syracuse in the sixth century BC, says that the columns erected are "beautiful works" (*kala erga*), or possibly that the columns were erected "as other works" (*alla erga*) since the inscription is not easy to read (Hellmann 1999 , no. 42). More precisely, the emergence of Greek architectural orders, which

we can identify as the construction of rules defining what may be called "beautiful," seems closely related to the activity of temple building (Barletta 2001). In Vitruvius' treatise, the presentation of the different kinds of buildings begins with the temples (books III–IV), before civic buildings (book V). The presentation of the temples gives Vitruvius the means to expose the principle of proportion and the system of measurement, both in accordance to the human body (3. 1), and the theory of the orders (3. 5; 4. 1, 3, 6). The definition of the three canonical orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian) is closely interconnected with the history of their "discovery," and the discoveries of Doric and Ionic orders are said to have happened during the building of temples (4. 1. 3–8). Moreover, amongst the people who have written on architecture in the past and whose works are cited by Vitruvius, the majority are architects who wrote about the temples they built (7. pr. 11–14). Proportion and order are fundamental for the whole of Classical architecture, whatever is to be built, and many cross-references are made to specific chapters in books III–IV in the rest of the treatise. The centrality of the temple – and more precisely of the Greek temple – in the definition of architectural beauty seems evident. But Vitruvius himself is writing in the second part of the first century BC, at the very end of the Hellenistic age, and it would be a mistake to confuse this reassessment of the cultural patrimony of this period with shared conceptions by citizens of a Greek city in the fifth or fourth century. In the fifth century, when Pindar equates metaphorically one of his poems with a building, the building he chooses, as architectural paradigm of visible beauty, is not a temple but a palace (Pind. *Ol.* 6. 1–3). Moreover, Vitruvius himself cites also, amongst his authorities, "Philo on the modular system and on the naval arsenal he built at the port of Piraeus" (7. pr. 12). Indeed a utilitarian building is not necessarily without beauty. In the fourth century BC, Aristotle explains that the walls of the city should serve not only as defense in war, but also as an ornament (*kosmos*) of the city (*Pol*. 7. 11, 1331a; similar association between safety or utility and adornment: *Pol.* 7. 7, 1330b; Plat. *leges* 6. 779B; Xen. *Poroi* 3.12). The inventory by Demosthenes of the adornments to Athens includes propylaia, porticoes, but also naval arsenal (Dem. *peri suntaxeōs* 28). In his treatise Vitruvius very rarely uses the word *pulchritudo* (beauty, *kallos*). Instead he uses, among others, the word "*uenustas*," which is closely linked to the notion of (sexual) pleasure (Gros 2006, 487–488). But, according to him, there is no contradiction between utility and pleasure: "All buildings must be executed in such a way as to take account of durability, utility and grace (*uenustas*)" (1. 2. 2). The complexity of relations between utility and visual pleasure is shown by Cicero:

> Yonder pediment of the Capitol and those of the other temples are the product not of beauty [*uenustas*] but of actual necessity; for it was in calculating how to make the rain-water fall off the two sides of the roof that the dignified design [*dignitas*] of the gables resulted as by-product of the need [*utilitas*] of the structure …

(Cic. *de Or*. 3. 180, tr. H. Rackham)

Beauty does not exclude utility, and the two notions are more often associated than opposed. To encourage Trajan to approve a new project, Pliny explains that "it is likely to combine utility with beauty [*pulchritudinis*]" (*ep*. 10.41.1). In the imperial enactments of late antiquity relating to buildings or spaces, utility (*usus congruae utilitatis*, *usus*) and external appearance (*species*) or ornamental value (*ornatus*) are closely linked (*CTh* 15. 1. 16, 37, 41).

Beauty may also be the beauty of a whole city. Civic beauty may be ethical or physical (Maupai 2003). Physical beauty is of value only if it is in harmony with the ethical beauty of the city (cf. e.g. Aelius Aristides *Or.* 27. 40–41): Dio Chrysostomus denounces the discordance between the natural advantages and the architectural beauties of Alexandria and the vices of the Alexandrians (*Or.* 32. 35–38). The beauty of a city may be due to to the natural charms of the site: groves, running water, rivers, temperate climate, location by the sea. The large dimensions of the agglomeration and a large population may also add to the beauty of a city: greatness and beauty are often linked (e.g. Strabo 12. 8. 11; Libanios *Or.* 1. 52). But architectural beauty is an essential component of civic beauty. The wording "beauties [or beauty] of buildings" occurs frequently in the Greek texts from the first century onward (e.g. Jos. *AJ* 5. 68; 8. 99) and is so common that it may be used, by Christian authors, in a critical tone. According to John Chrysostomus, the dignity and ornament (*kosmos*) of a city are not the beauty of its buildings (*kallos oikodomēmatōn*), but the virtue and piety of its inhabitants (*ad populum Antiochenum*. 17, *PG* 49, p. 176, l. 33 [AD 389]). This way of contrasting ethical and physical beauty is deeply rooted in a rhetorical and ethical tradition exemplified by Dio Chrysostomus (*Or*. 32. 95–96) and Aelius Aristides (*Or.* 23. 75–76).

The factors of embellishment – ethical or physical – of a city are designated as "*kosmos*" in Greek or "*ornamentum*" in Latin. Although the original meanings of these words are different (*kosmos* means originally "order," and *ornamentum* is derivated from "*ornare*," to adorn), some of their uses uses are similar. These words have, in the technical language of architecture, the meaning of "frieze" or "mouldings of the entablature" and are frequently applied in the inscriptions of the imperial period to the "architectural and/or sculptural decoration" of a building (for *kosmos*, see Robert 1980, 247; Hellmann 1992, 232; Pont 2010, 240–241; for *ornamentum*, see e.g. *ILS* 5488, 5581, 5640; *AE* 1999. 1825). More generally, they mean "adornment, enhancement," and may apply to jewelry, but also to any "equipment" like armour. In some cases, it is obvious that the *kosmos* is equated to jewelry, and the city to a woman. "You adorned me, says the city of Antioch to the courtier Datianos, with numerous buildings, like necklaces […] and after such expenditure, you turned away?" (Libanios *ep*. 114. 5). Two reasons may explain this kind of metaphor: the nouns *ciuitas* and *urbs* (in Latin) and *polis* (in Greek) are feminine; the "Fortune" (*Tyche*) of a city, which is like its

label, is a woman (see Meyer 2006). In fact, the relationship between emperor Constantius II and Antioch is described by Libanios as a true physical love (*Or*. 11. 180).

The Civic World of Imperial Times: An Obsession with Beauty

Eloquent speeches and inscriptions, which are the two main forms of public expression, show the importance of civic beauty for people and communities, mostly in Roman times. In the Hellenistic and imperial periods, public speech is a serious and important activity and rhetoric plays an essential role in the education of the elite. Occasions for public oratory are numerous. In many cases the orator must praise either his own city (when the city welcomes the governor or at the opening of a civic festival) or another city (during a conference tour, for example). According to the preserved handbooks of rhetoric, beauty is an unavoidable topic and a necessary argument in many cases: in an arrival speech, the orator must say that the city in which he has arrived is "the most beautiful on which the sun looks down," and when he is taking leave of it, he must "praise it […] from the beauty of its appearance"; the epilogue of a patriotic speech must be devoted to the description of the actual form of the city; a speech addressed to a governor in order to invite him on behalf of a city must contain an evocation of its beauty (Spengel, *Rhet. Gr.* 3 p. 383, l. 3–4; p. 386, l. 23ff.; p. 427, l. 14, p. 428, l. 15, p. 429, l. 15; p. 431, l. 2; cf. Russell and Wilson 1981). The Latin rhetorician Quintilian explains, in the first century AD, that buildings themselves may be praised under the heading of beauty, but also under the headings of honor and utility: honor in the case of temples, utility in the case of city walls … and beauty in all cases (Quint. *Inst.* 3. 7. 27): beauty in a building seems more easily found as a justification for praise than utility.

Beauty, often associated with large size, is in fact an obsessive topic in rhetorical and literary production relating to cities. From these texts, it is possible to list the buildings that contribute most to this beauty: temples, colonnades, harbors, baths, statues, and also private buildings. The best example of praise of a city is Libanios'*Antiochiko*s (*Or.* 11. 196–272 [AD 356]). At the beginning of the speech, the orator claims that his city "is the most beautiful thing in the most beautiful land under heaven" (§16, cf. §193). The long, last part of the discourse is devoted to the description of the actual form of the city and its surroundings. All arguments are used in order to point out their beauty. The imperial palace is of unsurpassed beauty (§207); the beauty of the suburbs of Daphne has no equal anywhere (§238); the beauty of the private baths in the city exceeds that of the public baths (§245); the beauty is even more striking because the city is large (§§205, 207, 238, 244).

Beauty and adornment play an important role in the epigraphic discourse. In

the Greek-speaking world, euergetes, and eventually governors, are honored "because they have embellished the city": in the second century AD, in Thyateira (Lydia), Tiberius Claudius Socrates is described as "having adorned since he was a child the motherland [i.e. the city] by ornaments of works and multiple acts of munificence" (*TAM* 5. 2. 980); in Pergamon, a gymnasiarch is honored because he vied in acting for the beauty of the motherland (*IGRR* 4. 446); during the Tetrarchy, in Ephesos, the council and the citizens of Ephesos "honor A. Artorius Pius Maximus, proconsul of senatorial rank, who adorned the motherland with numerous and large works and restored the gymnasium" (*I. Ephesos* 621). A few Latin inscriptions, too, mention that donors give money or buildings "for the adornment of the city" (*in ornamentum ciuitatis, ad ornamentum ciuitatis*: *AE* 1992. 1800. Abbir Maius; *CIL* 8. 8466, Sitifis, second century), or underline the contribution of a governor or a euergete to the beauty (*pulchritudo*) of a building or of the whole city (ex.: *CIL* 11. 4095, Ocriculum, fourth century).

This obsessive reference to beauty is far from being gratuitous. Beauty is an argument for a city to be favored by the imperial power and to gain advantages over other cities. In the Classical and in part of the Hellenistic Greek world, cities were very often at war – over their boundaries, for example, or to compete for hegemony. In the imperial Greek world, struggle takes the form of competition for status and primacy amongst the cities of the same province or region. The stakes are to obtain official titles from the imperial power, often referring to the role played by the city in the imperial cult or to her "first position" in the province. In the Roman province of Asia, three cities were in competition: Pergamon, Ephesos, and Smyrna. Pergamon was "the first," Ephesos the "first and largest." From the beginning of the third century AD onward, Smyrna could be proud to be "the first in terms of beauty and size" (cf. e.g. *I. Smyrna* 637). The mention of beauty and size, in fact, diminishes the strength of "first position." It is a kind of consolation prize for a city that is not entitled to say that it is the "absolute first." This title, however, testifies to the acknowledgment, by the imperial power, of Smyrna's beauty, celebrated by a long literary and rhetorical tradition (Heller 2006, 326ff.) At the same period, two cities in Cilicia, Tarsos and Anazarbos, bear the title of "first, the largest and the most beautiful" (Ziegler 1985, 82, 87, 108). In the fourth century, two Syrian cities, Apamea, and, most probably, Laodicea on the Sea, compete for precedence in honor. Before the emperor Julian, the argument exposed by the representatives of Laodicea is its beauty due to the proximity of the sea. Julian decides to give the precedence to Apamea, because the city is a well-known philosophical center (Libanios, *Or.* 18. 187): for Julian, ethical beauty must prevail over physical beauty. What is important in this story is not Julian's advice, but the argumentation used by the Laodiceans and the fact that the case was defended before the imperial tribunal.

These examples relate to cities of the Greek-speaking Eastern part of the Mediterranean empire. That is not to say that urban beauty or rivalry between the cities was less important in the Latin-speaking Western part of the empire. Sources are different: the Latin oratory production has been almost totally lost, the epigraphic material is less abundant in the West than in the East, with a different phraseology due to the use of a different language, and there is an hierarchy of statutes between cities, but not a competition for titles. However, some allusions in literary texts emphasize the existence of a competitive relationship between cities, and the role of buildings in this relationship. The rivalry between Vienna and Lugdunum (see Tac. *Hist*. 1. 65. 3) may explain that these two ajoining cities possess a theatre and an odeum, the latter being otherwise very rare in the Western provinces. During the war between the Othonians and the Vitellians (AD 69), as the amphitheatre of Piacenza in Italy was destroyed by fire, the inhabitants of the city believed the fire was caused by people of other cities, who looked on it "with envy and jealousy" (*inuidia et aemulatione*) (Tac. *Hist.* 2. 21. 3).

The Patrimony of Empire

The consideration of beauty has consequences not only for the competition between cities. According to Plutarch, after his victory over Antony and Cleopatra Octavian proclaimed that "he acquitted the people of Alexandria of all blame […] because he admired the great size and beauty of the city" (*Ant.* 80. 2). Moerover, the granting to some Eastern cities of official titles mentioning their beauty shows that beauty may have been of imperial concern.

The notion of "ornaments" (the word *ornamentum* is often used as plural; *ornatus* is also in use) is indeed a legislative and juridical topic in Roman law (see Thomas 1998). The "ornaments" may be buildings, like a portico, statues, or parts of buildings like columns, or even materials like marble. Indeed these materials may represent a very important part of the total cost of a building (Blin 2012). Juridically, each new ornament is an addition to the ornaments included in a private patrimony or in the patrimony of a city, and the result is conceived as a whole. In AD 44, a decree of the Senate, the *senatus consultum Hosidianum*, states that in private transactions, it is legally forbidden to separate the ornaments and the whole of which they are a part: a house can be sold, but it must be sold with its ornaments. However, it is possible for a landowner, who has two houses, to take ornaments from one of his houses and to reuse them in the other house: ornaments, in this case, remain in the same patrimony. The emperor Vespasian and later emperors confirm this legal disposition (*Codex Iustinianus*, hereafter *CJ* 8. 10. 2, cf. D. 39. 2. 48); Constantine adds that this transfer of materials is forbidden from a house in a city to a rural estate (*CJ* 8. 10. 6). In the same way, ornaments of public and private buildings belong to the common patrimony of each city and

of the whole empire. Any diminution of this patrimony would be a sign of weakness of the empire, and even a loss of substance. Therefore, ornaments must remain constant or increase.

Such juridical principles explain that ruins and destruction are unbearable for the imperial Roman state and its agents. In AD 127, in a letter to the city of Stratonice (Caria), Hadrian commands that "the house of Tiberius Claudius Socrates in the city shall either be repaired or sold to any one of the native inhabitants, lest it may collapse through age and neglect" (Robert 1948, 80–82). More generally, the governor must look after all private and public buildings in the cities of his province, and can force the city or a private landowner to repair damaged buildings (*D*. 1. 18. 7). The integration of a single private house in the common patrimony of a city, and its contribution to the beauty of the whole, are emphasized by Libanios in the fourth century, as a crucial argument in a context of conflict. During Constantine's reign, a certain Theodulos has built or adorned his house with material he bought from people who in turn have taken it from the demolition of a temple. During Julian's reign, Theodulos is accused, and Libanios tries to defend him. The notion of a civic urban patrimony of ornaments, conceived as a whole, is the core of his argumentation:

> I desire that the temples be restored to their beauty, and Yes I wouldn't want this to take place at the expense of houses being destroyed, when it might happen and the houses remain standing as well, so that what is presently in existence may still stand and what is in ruins may be restored and so that we don't in some respects adorn the cities while in other respects defiguring them. There's a reason to hand to criticize the house of Theodulos, but it's worth sparing it, for it's beautiful and grand and it makes our city more beautiful than others.
>
> (Lib., *ep.* 724, tr. S. Bradbury).

Similar arguments are used, in other circumstances, to protect pagan temples. At the very end of the fourth century AD, in 399, the Roman emperors Arcadius and Honorius forbade pagan sacrifices, but decided that the "ornament formed by public works" (*publicorum operum ornamenta*), that is, the pagan temples, should be preserved, thus recognizing that architecture as such is of value for the state and society (*CTh.* 16. 10. 15; see Lizzi 2001; see also Lib, *Or*. 30. 42–43). The imperial aid often mentioned after an earthquake (Bérenger-Badel 2005; Conti 2008) must also be explained in this legal context. And for a Greek city, to call herself "*kosmos*," that is, "ornament," of Asia or of Ionia (as is the case for Ephesus, *kosmos* of Asia, and Smyrna, *kosmos* of Ionia), is a way to vindicate having an important part in the common patrimony of the imperial world, and perhaps to ensure some specific attention from the imperial state in case of earthquake or other destruction.

The notion of "beauty" (*kallos*/*pulchritudo* or *uenustas*) is ambiguous and multifarious: it includes physical and ethical beauty. Morever, the physical beauty may be natural or artificial. The advantage of beauty claimed by the representatives of Laodicea in the fourth century is due to the Mediterrean Sea. But the beauty of a city depends at least in part, and often for a large part, on the beauty of its buildings. Even more ambiguous is the ornament (*kosmos*/*ornamentum*). In Roman law, it may be understand with an abstract and juridical sense of "component of a patrimony," but this component is necessarily a concrete material (marble) or a building. The preservation of the good state of this component is a necessity for the preservation of the patrimony: a minimal definition of beauty would be "physical integrity." Public and private buildings contribute to the beauty of a city, and the beauty of cities testifies to the prosperity, happiness, and durability of the empire. Aesthetics in antiquity cannot be very far from politics.

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FURTHER READING

Very good introductions to Greek and Roman architecture are the well-illustrated books by Hellmann (2002–2006) and Gros (2002–2006). For introductions to "urbanism," see Greco and Torelli (1983), MacDonald (1986), Gros and Torelli (2007). About architectural techniques, see Malacrino (2010). Vitruvius' treatise was translated many times in many languages. A valuable transation in English by Richard Schofield with an introduction by Robert Tavernor has been published in the Penguin Classics collection (2009). See further, Mc Ewen (2003) and Gros (2006). Concerning civic beauty, a lot of texts are collected in Maupai (2003). The title of the present essay, chosen by the editors of the volume, is a reminiscence of and an homage to the pioneering book of Gros (1978), *Architecture et Société à Rome*, and the collection of essays published by the "École française de Rome," *Architecture et société de l'archaïsme grec à la fin de la république romaine, Paris/Rome* (1983).

PART II
Reflecting on Art

CHAPTER 9
Literary Criticism and the Poet's Autonomy

Andrew Ford

The fact that the term "aesthetics" was only introduced into philosophic discourse by Alexander Baumgarten in 1735 is regarded by some historians of the subject as a sign that the ancient Greeks were not much interested in questions about the nature of beauty and the arts. (For them, *ta aisthētika* would have suggested sense perception in general.) Other historians treat this fact as a factoid, a historical curiosity that need not stand in the way of assuming that the ancients responded to works of art in ways much like ourselves and confronted the same problems as we do when we try to think about beauty and art. The problem with this reasonable assumption is that it is hard to amass many actual texts that deal directly with the subject: most ancient discussions of issues we would define as aesthetic are embedded in works devoted to quite other topics, especially politics, ethics, or metaphysics. Thus Kristeller's much-quoted denial that the ancients had anything comparable to modern aesthetics remains a challenge: "ancient writers and thinkers, though confronted with excellent works of art and quite susceptible to their charm, were neither able nor eager to detach the aesthetic quality of these works of art."[1]

The present chapter hopes to throw light on this question by turning from the Greeks' philosophies of art to their literary criticism. The daily, practical business of commenting on poems, interpreting them, and evaluating them implied the existence of standards for judging literature. This was especially so in the "agonistic" musical culture of the Greeks, which regularly set one poem against another in a competition to see which was the "finest" (*kallistos*: Ford 2002, 272–293). Already in the Archaic period, the most prestigious performances of Homeric epic took the form of competitions among professional reciters (*rhapsōidoi*), and the Athenian contests in tragic, comic, and dithyrambic poetry are well known; amateurs exchanging songs at drinking parties often turned to singing games. All such events raised the question, whether explicitly or implicitly, of what criteria to use when declaring one poem "finest" of all. I propose to study closely two texts from Classical Athens in which the question of standards is discussed. The pair is notable for suggesting that works of verbal art ought to be judged on their own terms. Taken together and set in context, the texts suggest that, in practice if not always in theory, the ancients recognized an aesthetic dimension to literature to a far greater extent than is sometimes allowed.

In criticism, the possibility of a literary aesthetics emerges most clearly in the question of whether poets have any autonomy in the sense of immunity to certain kinds of objections that may be laid against their work. In the texts to be examined, the specific form this question takes is whether poems have any value that is unconnected to social, moral, or political values. Claims for the autonomy of the aesthetic, of course, were widely asserted and roundly challenged in Romantic and modern theory (see Abrams 1985). But critical practice is concerned less with questions about the status of the work of art in itself – whether it is a thing in its own right with values of its own – than with the poets' right of appeal against certain strictures on their work. In practice, as I will argue, poetry could in certain contexts enjoy a rather robust concept of autonomy.

To focus on critical practice rather than poetic theory is not, of course, to sidestep the formidable problems with establishing the aesthetic as a separate realm of experience or philosophy. For "literary criticism" is as difficult to define as aesthetics. What makes literary criticism *literary*? Is it that it has a special kind of object in view that calls for special standards to be fairly evaluated? How, then, could we set such objects apart, without circularity, from other human activities and productions we may wish to judge? Or is literary criticism a kind of approach that may be taken to many and perhaps all kinds of verbal expression? In that case, how could the foundations of such an approach be established without question-begging distinctions between reason and taste? Like "aesthetics," "literary criticism" has no precise counterpart in ancient Greek or Latin, and so we must be careful when we read our texts not to assume that "the literary" was recognized as a distinct and autonomous area of human activity. Indeed, the term "literature" itself must be used in quotation marks since,pragmatically, the Greeks tended to think mainly of poetry when they thought of high verbal art and to discuss the issues that concern us primarily in relation to poems. If we are willing, however, to bracket these problems of definition, attending to certain passages debating how to critique a poetic text is a promising area in which to discover whether the ancients were willing to recognize a value in works of art that was not reducible to political, ethical, or other non-poetic values.

Two short but dense texts center this study. The first is a passage from Aristotle's *Poetics* that is remarkable as the only explicit statement in ancient criticism that poems are to be judged by the laws of poetry and not by those of another art. The passage is hardly unknown, but tends to be ignored or interpreted weakly. I will offer a strong reading and explain how it can be accommodated to Aristotle's other stated views about poetry. The second text is meant to suggest that Aristotle's was not an isolated position in the critical tradition. It is a scene from Aristophanes' *Frogs*, produced in 405 BC. In the play's parodic poetry contest, Euripides comes very near to articulating an aesthetic defense of his art along lines very like Aristotle's. Though the idea is

quickly passed by, the resemblance to Aristotle suggests that his was not an idiosyncratic view and that a certain autonomy for works of art was already imaginable in the fifth century. It must be conceded that claims for poetic autonomy are not often sounded in the Greco-Roman critical tradition, and I shall offer reasons for why this is so.

First, it will be necessary to sketch the intellectual background to these texts, in particular to highlight a new conception of "art" (*tekhnē*) that rose to prominence over the fifth century BC. The key point here will not be – as it was for Kristeller and others holding that the ancients lacked a distinct conception of the aesthetic – an alleged failure on the part of the Greeks to distinguish "fine art" from "craft" (both of which could be designated by *tekhnē*); rather it will be the conceptual depth given by fifth-century speculative thought to the notion of *tekhnē* as productive activity which proceeds in accordance with specifiable principles toward a definite end. In this perspective, an artisan who would produce a work worth commending as "fine" (*kalos*) was bound to observe the principles of his or her *tekhnē* and was culpable for infringing them. At the same time, however, the proliferation of highly developed and specialized arts/crafts in Classical Athens made it obvious that each one had aims and methods of its own; this could suggest that it made little sense to hold an artisan accountable to principles belonging to one art when she or he was practicing another. In this way, the Classical period set the stage for a notion of poetic autonomy in its root sense, one that insisted on poets' respecting the laws (*nomoi*) of their own (*aut-*) discipline, but that limited their exposure to demands of other arts/crafts. Aristotle's strong assertion of *poetic* autonomy amounted to granting poets immunity from prosecution for violating laws that come from outside poetics, most notably the art of politics.

Art (*tekhnē*) and Autonomy

Large-scale claims have been made to explain why a separate category of the aesthetic was somehow, intellectually or culturally, impossible to conceive before Baumgarten and the emergence of the fine arts in the eighteenth century. Such theses are worryingly overgeneral, and yet *Ancient Literary Criticism*, the excellent anthology by Donald Russell and Michael Winterbottom (1972), does show that Greek and Roman writers give short shrift to aesthetic considerations when they critique their poetic traditions. From the earliest discursive remarks on Greek poetry, surfacing in the sixth century BC, through the voluminous rhetorical and pedagogical works of the imperial age, the preponderant concern in ancient discussions of literature is one they would have called ethical and we would call political: the one question most often asked of works of verbal art – and often the decisive question in assessing their worth – was whether they were likely to make a person hearing or reading them a good citizen: did they help, or at least not

hinder, their audiences' becoming and being just, temperate, pious, and wise in their dealings with others and with the gods? The prevailing ethical tendency in ancient criticism was complicated (and made more interesting) by the early realization that poetry afforded a powerful kind of pleasure that, in itself, need have nothing to do with forming character: its ability to "enchant" (*thelgein*) the soul is taken for granted already in Homer and is a commonplace thereafter. This hedonistic strand, however, is easily reconnected with ethical concerns: already in Homer and Hesiod the quasi-magical power of poetry to delight is associated with social goods – with distracting minds from debilitating distress or ensuring that the glorious deeds of ancestors are preserved for later generations to emulate (cf. Halliwell 2011).

At first sight, it may have seemed a slight modification in traditional views when poetry was seen as one among many productive arts in the fifth century BC; but the conception of *tekhnē* itself was shifting at the time and this opened the door to evaluating works of verbal art not against the usual moral and social norms but with an eye to their intrinsic properties, such as linguistic correctness or formal perfection. A prime stimulus in this development was the powerful new model of art provided by Hippocratic medicine: rejecting supernatural and occult causes, the healing art could boast that it improved human life through the methodical application of unaided reason to natural phenomena. This technical, rationalist, and progressive idea of art was carried over into the study of language and its products by sophists like Protagoras, Prodicus, and Gorgias and by anthropologists/natural scientists like Democritus. Their fundamental contribution was to insist that poetry was a *tekhnē* as they understood "art," a productive enterprise that could be analyzed to discover the way of proceeding that would best ensure success (Ford 2002, 161–175). Although affinities between the making of poetry and artisanal production can be traced very far back in Greek and pre-Greek literature (Nagy 1990), it was only in the fifth century that poetry was spoken of as a *tekhnē* in the sense of a methodical "art" rather than a "craft" that might depend on an inborn knack or inspired ability (Ford 2002, ch. 6). Many of those professing the "modern" approach to poetry were concerned with rhetoric, and their focus on the role of language in persuasion brought poetic linguistic devices more into view. They tended to regard poetry simply as speech (*logos*) with meter added as an enhancement (meter being the most obvious of the liberties in expression poetry was traditionally allowed). This suggested that its special hold over its audiences could be traced to intrinsic, formal properties. Once poetry was studied in this way, one could pronounce upon the "correctness" (*orthotēs*, related to "orthodontist") of a poem in technical, linguistic terms without reference to its truth or social utility. An aspect of such enlightened fifth-century inquiries into poetry, then, was to raise the possibility at least of evaluating it on its own terms.

In an important if limited way, these studies created a space for a non-political, non-moralizing form of poetic criticism: if poetry is viewed as language elaborated to impress an audience, an expert has grounds for confining his appraisal of a work to the question of whether it is technically "correctly" (*orthōs*) composed, whether its message had been designed and executed in the way most likely to win acceptance by the audience addressed. The question of whether its message harmed or helped the city could be, with all due allowance for its importance, set aside as a separate question belonging outside the specific field of inquiry; in much the same way, the art of rhetoric established its technical status without committing itself to particular ethical or political positions. In this way and to this extent, fifth-century science and rhetoric opened a path to aesthetic appreciation of poetry by separating the knowledge of how something was said from what was said; the implication was that it was possible in some important sense to do the former "finely" (*kalōs*), whether or not the latter was thought fine. A technical assessment of poetic language was not the only way to evaluate poetry, of course, but its advocates placed it on a very high level: "The most important part of education," Protagoras asserts in Plato's dialogue of that name, "is being exceptionally clever about poetic language [*peri epōn deinos*]; that is, to be able to perceive what in poetry is said correctly [*orthōs*] and what not, to know how to distinguish between the two and be able to give an account of oneself when questioned" (*Prot*. 339A).

For cultural conservatives, these new insights into the power of poetic language made it only more imperative to scrutinize poems' moral and social effects. As Plato's *Gorgias* dramatizes, even those who could establish themselves as technical experts in using language effectively could not claim exemption from society's demand that their science be exercised for the benefit of the community. There was, in short, a tension between the way scientific critics might use the word *kalōs* to praise formally perfect works of art as "finely done" and the meaning this flexible word had in popular criticism, which was ever ready to take extrinsic values into account and to connect the attractiveness of satisfying form to moral or social fineness. Ultimately, this is the tension between the *dulce* and the *utile* as standards for judging poetry, and Aristotle's *Poetics* stands out in this tradition for articulating the enlightened point of view that the artisanal status of poets entitles them, in some contexts, to immunity from political and moralizing critiques.

The Poet's Autonomy in *Poetics* Ch. 25

Aristotle's *Poetics* addresses not only the nature of poetry, its genres and their powers, but, as he says at the beginning of the work, "a number of other topics that belong to this field of inquiry" (Ch. 1, 1447a11–12).[2] One of these related topics is discussed in the 25th of its 26 extant chapters, entitled "On Problems

and Solutions." The terms refer to a popular poetry game in which one player posed a challenge (*proballesthai*) to a piece of poetry, a "problem" that another player had to solve (*lusis*), usually by proposing an interpretation on which the cited passage could be defended as "correct" (*orthōs*; Ch. 25, 1460b24; cf. 1460b13). Chapter 25 proposes to "theorize" (1460b7) the rules for such a game, and is introduced as follows (1460b6–21, my paragraphing):

> On the subject of challenges [*problēmata*] that may be put to poetry and how to meet them [*luseis*], one can discern [*theōrein*] their number and nature by reflecting in the following way. Since the poet is a representer of things [*mimētēs*], just like a painter or other image maker, he will necessarily in any given case represent one of three kinds of things: things such as they were or are now; or what people say and suppose [was or is]; or what should be.
>
> And the language in which these things are propounded admits archaisms, metaphors and other deviations from normal speech; but we grant this to poets.
>
> *A further consideration is that correctness* [orthotēs] *in the art of poetry is not the same as in the art of politics, nor in any other art.* In terms of the art of poetry, there are two kinds of mistake [*hamartia*], a mistake in terms of the art or an incidental mistake. For if the poet [chose to represent a horse correctly, but erred through] incompetence, the error belongs to the art itself. But if there is something incorrect about the object chosen – for example, a running horse with both right legs thrust forward at the same time – the error pertains to a specific art, such as medicine or whatever you wish; it is not a mistake that belongs to the art of poetry itself.

The sentence I have italicized is the most explicit claim for poetic autonomy in antiquity. The question is how far Aristotle thought this immunity to criticism extended, for to distinguish the principles of poetic composition from those of politics or medicine seems to carve out a very large sphere of autonomy: one can readily see that a doctor's complaint, for example, that Homer gives the wrong recipe for restorative beverages would be regarded as a quibble (see Plato, *Rep*. E-406A for a criticism of *Il*. 11.630 in such terms); but Aristotle also mentions the art of politics, which in his view subsumed ethics; hence to say that problems raised against poetry by experts in *politikē* may be dismissed as "incidental" to the art is considerable autonomy indeed.

In the nineteenth century this passage was taken as an unqualified endorsement of aesthetic autonomy:

> Aristotle asserts that poetry is to be measured not by a moral but by a purely aesthetic standard. All important in his eyes is the perfection of the imitation, the shaping activity of the artist. Poetry must be judged by its own laws, its own basal assumptions, and errors that are errors only

according to some alien standard are faults [incidentally], and accordingly excusable.

(Carroll 1895, 18)

A few modern commentators have agreed that "the independence of poetic *orthotēs* [correctness] suggests the existence of purely aesthetic values" (Lucas 1968, 235), but most recent Aristotelians would say this goes much too far. A main reason is that the statement is at odds with what seems to be Aristotle's ethical orientation in the rest of the *Poetics* (to say nothing of the assumptions of ancient literary criticism as a whole). After all, it has been urged, ethics is the stuff from which tragic plots are made – with good or bad characters meeting success or disaster according to their moral choices (6.1449b36–50a3). Indeed, the very emotions that the tragic art is designed to arouse, pity and fear, are conceived by Aristotle as having a cognitive basis: they arise from a *judgment* that a particular situation is worthy of pity or fear (13.1453a3–7). As a result, a poet will have to take ethical matters into account to make a play that will engage his audience's emotions. As Amelie Rorty puts it: "Although Aristotle focuses on the formal elements of tragedy – on the best way to structure plots, his is not an aesthetic theory. The pleasures and insights of tragedy do not rest solely or primarily in their purely formal properties, in the elegance and structural tension of balance" (Rorty 1992, 2; cf. Nightingale 2006, 40).

Those who hold further that Aristotle conceived that the pleasure of poetry is one of moral learning are particularly prone to resist any suggestion that poetic criticism might be insulated from political or ethical concerns.[3] Among these, Stephen Halliwell and Malcolm Heath have most directly confronted Ch. 25 and tried to minimize its implications by stressing the qualifications Aristotle goes on to make. On Halliwell's reading, Aristotle says not that "correct standards for poetry are not the same as those in politics or in other arts" but only offers "the proposition of non-identity of the values in question" (1989, 339–341; cf. 2011, 210–222). Heath argues similarly that in saying "correctness is not the same thing in politics and poetry" Aristotle "does not mean that they are unconnected but that they are not co-extensive" (Heath 2009, 469). These attempts to find some overlap between poetic correctness and ethical values seem strained as paraphrases, and in any case run up against the clear trend of Aristotle's argument in the chapter which, as will be seen, never curtails the status of poetic principles as the ultimate determiners of poetic correctness. Aristotle does indeed allow, implicitly here and explicitly in the *Politics* and *Ethics*, that outside the game of "problems" poets may have to bow to the authority of other arts and yield to their recommendations. The key consideration, however, is not some ineliminable link between poetry and politics or ethics but the contexts in which critical discussion takes place. What *Poetics* 25 declares unswervingly is that, when adults discuss poems and debate their merits among themselves, ethics and

politics will have to take a back seat to poetics.

Let us take up, then, Aristotle's argument as it develops in what all agree is a difficult and corrupt text at points. In the quoted passage, Aristotle sets out his method: to distinguish three kinds of challenge that may be made to a poem and to suggest, invoking principles developed earlier in the treatise, a line of defense for each. One kind of objection concerns what the poet says, the "objects of imitation"; but Ch. 2 had established the principle that poets can represent people who are better, worse, or like us (1448a1–6); the payoff in Ch. 25 is that, if it is objected that a poet has represented something impossible, an Aristotelian can reply that poetic representations need not be realistic but may portray the way things were, ought to be, or even are thought to be. We need not delay over the second kind of "problem," those concerning language or "the medium" in which poets exercise the imitative art, as Ch. 1 explained. Defusing objections to poetic expressions will take up the most space in Ch. 25 (1461a9–1461b9), but does not involve aesthetic issues since Aristotle roots this license in convention without any appeal to the imperatives of the poetic art: "for we grant these things to the poets" (1460b13). It suffices to observe that grammar police must not harass poets if they do what their art tells them to do – "season" their mode of expression to make it more pleasant (1449b25, 1460b22 with Janko 1987). The third principle (italicized above) is the one that will mainly concern us. This is to distinguish between an error (*hamartēma*) in a passage of poetry that violates one of the principles of the poetic art and errors in terms of some other field of knowledge. In the game of problems, Aristotle rules that errors in respect to other arts are only incidental, while an error with respect to the poetic art may be pronounced "incorrect," not *orthōs* (1460b23).

This important distinction is illustrated with examples from the visual arts. In a passage that is corrupt but tolerably clear, Aristotle says that if a painter or sculptor portrayed a running horse with both right legs thrust forward (which he wrongly assumed was impossible), this would be technically a mistake to an expert in the art of equitation but only an incidental error in terms of the arts of painting and sculpting, whose ends, presumably, are producing convincing representations (1460b16–21, cf. Janko 2011, 522). A little later he gives a second example from the visual arts – painting a female deer with horns (1460b30–32): as the author of the *Parts of Animals*, Aristotle sees a technical error here, but says it is less of an error than painting one that cannot be recognized (Halliwell 1989, 333).

These examples suggest that the each of the mimetic arts works according to rules inherent in the form and these are not to be overridden by demands arising from other areas of expertise. This position would seem to commit Aristotle to entertaining arguments that, in the poetic arts, distortions of reality or even untruths can be defended if they communicate the poem's effect more fully or more powerfully. He goes a considerable distance in this

direction when he turns back from painting to poetry to spell out what counts as an error with respect to the art itself (1460a22–61a9). Aristotle says that, against charges that what a poet has represented is impossible, one can reply that the impossibility is "correct" if it contributes to the *telos* of the work, its purpose or "end" (1460b22–28). The important role of a poem's end or function (*telos* or *ergon*) is implicit from the first sentence of the *Poetics*: Aristotle says one must define each particular kind of poetry (each genre) to determine the "potential" or "capacity" (*dunamis*) it has, for only if we know this can we decide whether a given poem is such as can be called "fine" (*kalōs ekhei*, 1.1447a10). For example, the art of tragedy aims to produce "a sort of *katharsis* of pity and fear" in the audience, and this end entails that "the tragedy which is most excellent [*kallistos*] in respect to the art" will show a change from good fortune to bad (1453a22–23). Tragic poets who compose plots in which the good end happily and the evil suffer may win contests, but their works forfeit endorsement as *kalos* because the kind of pleasure (*hēdonē*, 1453a36) they afford more properly belongs to a different genre, comedy, which has different ends (1453a30–39).

In Ch. 25, Aristotle illustrates the principle with an example from epic, Achilles' solo pursuit of Hector in the *Iliad* in which the hero restrains the Greek warriors from joining in the pursuit just with a nod (*Il.* 22.205–206). This scene had already been noticed in Ch. 24 as implausible but effective; Aristotle finds it commendable because it contributes to the epic's *telos* by increasing the audience's sense of the marvelous (*to thaumaston*); the marvelous is by definition pleasurable for Aristotle, who remarks that it is especially at home in epic where the recitative mode can make an absurdity less obtrusive than it would be if seen on the dramatic stage (24.1460a11–17). In Ch. 25, Achilles' pursuit of Hector shows that, in quest of providing or augmenting a pleasure appropriate to his genre, the poet may violate probability.

The distinction between incidental and technical errors will map out a rather large area of autonomy; and one could characterize this as aesthetic autonomy to the extent that the "end" of the mimetic arts is not to convey facts past or present or to provide models of ethical conduct but to produce those emotional responses the art in question is designed to elicit. To be sure, the poet's autonomy is not absolute, and Aristotle goes on to put limits on it. The poet does not have license to flout notions of the possible for no reason: ideally, he says, one ought to make no mistakes, and so a poet can be justly blamed for importing an impossibility if it was possible for the poetic end to be achieved no less strongly without the mistake in the particular art (25.1460b26–28). There is no reason, however, to infer from this some obligation on the poet's part to remain attached to the real world (e.g. Halliwell 2000, 110), for this limitation on the poet's autonomy does not come from the authority of any other art but from the requirements of the

poetic art itself: the art determines the end of each genre, and everything in the poem should further that end, "either as contributing to the end in itself or by making another part of the work more striking" (1460b25–26). The poet's obligation to his own art, which directs him to produce certain emotions in the audience, trumps demands that he be realistic, but imposes on him the obligation not to insert gratuitous irrationalities – not because they are irrational but because they are gratuitous, that is, they dilute the force of the work. (Cf. 1462a18–62b13 on the superiority of tragedy to epic because tragic unity is "not watered down" with irrelevant episodes.)

Having won for poets permission to portray impossibilities, Aristotle then defends them against charges that what they say is untrue (1460b32ff.). Reverting to his observations opening the chapter, he says sometimes poets can be exculpated as exercising their right to portray how things ought to be or how things were (1461a1–4). An additional possibility is to say the poet has represented things the way people say they are (1460b35). Here Aristotle instances matters dealing with the gods: if a poet be faulted for following popular belief and portraying jealous and malicious gods, for example, the reply Aristotle recommends is, "That's what people say." This casual waving away of charges of moral impropriety must seem inadequate to those who expect the *Poetics* to dismantle Plato's censoring of divine immorality in Homer and Hesiod in the *Republic*; but Aristotle's only concession to this tradition, which can be traced back to Xenophanes (cf. 1461a1), is to allow that "it might be better that some such stories were told another way." But he wraps up his point simply by repeating what he considers a sufficient reply to such charges – "that's what people say" (1460b36–61a1). It is more important that a poem engage the beliefs and even prejudices of its audience than that it be philosophically or theologically correct.

Just as poets are not bound to confine representations of the gods to the morally commendable, they need not limit representations of human action to the ethically admirable. In meeting ethical objections to what characters do or say, Aristotle urges considering not only whether the thing is contemptible in itself, but also the agent, the context, and the agent's purposes; one would therefore not blame, for example, an evil done "so that a greater good may occur or a greater evil avoided." There is, to be sure, a limit on justifying representations of unethical behavior, as in the case of absurdities: "Criticism of irrationality and depravity is right when they are unnecessary and they serve no purpose" (1460b26–28, tr. Halliwell), Aristotle says, pointing to Menelaus in Euripides' *Orestes* as an example of gratuitous wickedness (1461b19–21; cf. 15: 1454a28–29). Once again, Aristotle's qualification leads some to infer that, even if ethical and poetic correctness are not identical, ethical judgments ought to inform artistic ones (e.g. Halliwell 1989, 342; Heath 2009, 469). It is certainly true, as said above, that an audience's ethical concerns are not put to sleep when watching a play; but Aristotle does not

espouse a view that art must be as far as possible morally uplifting, any more than he had said art ought to strive for realism. Again, the *telos* rules: because the art of poetry dictates that the "finest" form in each genre must be that which best conduces to its end, gratuitous evil is objectionable not because it is evil but because it is gratuitous, that is to say, the evil neither contributes to the end in itself or makes another part of the work more striking. When irrationality or depravity are *gratuitously* introduced, a valid objection may be raised, but it will be based on the art of poetry, not on ethics or politics. It says, in effect, that the *Orestes* would work just as well if Menelaus were a benign character; one could keep the plot and have the essential emotional effect. James Hutton (1982, 18) comments well: "the characters are required to be 'good' not for the sake of affording models of conduct, but because the fortunes and misfortunes of vicious characters would not elicit from the normal spectator or reader the response proper to this kind of poetry." For this reason Aristotle had previously (in 13.1454a10–13) commended early poets for discovering, even if by chance rather than art, that only a limited number of families supplied suitable myths for tragic plots, for example the house of Laius or of Atreus with their generations of parricide, filicide, infidelity, and cannibalism. He thus recommends stories of houses beset with evil doings and sufferings as what the art demands, as making for "the finest tragedies in artistic terms" (13.1453a12–23).

At this point Aristotle concludes his defenses of the autonomy of poetry based on his distinction between objections pertaining to the art of poetry and those of other arts.

He then takes up a series of linguistic solutions, which, as I have noted, is less germane to our inquiry. One may remark, however, that the prominence of linguistic issues in Ch. 25 supports the connection argued for earlier between the sophistic study of poetic language and assertions of poetic autonomy. In this light, *Poetics* Ch. 25 appears as an attempt to give a theoretical basis to the possibility, opened up by fifth-century specialists in poetic language, of judging verbal art in technical rather than political or moral terms; because poetry is an art, its products can claim an essential autonomy, a right of appeal to "the art of poetry and not another art."

Poetic Autonomy and Politics

Aristotle's defense of poetic autonomy, however, does not entail that poetry is completely independent of politics and ethics. To say that poetry, like any art, has its own end (*telos*) is *not* to say that poetry is autotelic in the sense that it is an end in itself. No ancient ever declared that art was "radically cut off from the domains of morals, utility, religion and the like" (Porter 2010 , 166; cf. Shiner 2009, 161–163); an assertion of absolute freedom was bound to sound odd to the Greeks, and autonomy in this sense has all the earmarks of a

Romantic aspiration. Aristotle is quite clear in his *Politics* (Bks. 7–8) that the art of poetry should be ruled by that of politics in some contexts, such as fixing school curricula or regulating public entertainments. The reasons are spelled out in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and its notion of "architectonic arts": every art aims at some good, an end for the sake of which everything in the art is done; but some ends call for combining several arts, and in these cases some artists will fall under the command of others according to their contribution to the ultimate end. So when an architect tells carpenters, sculptors, and stonemasons what to make, the individual artisans have autonomy in the techniques they choose to apply to their materials, but the *arkhitektōn*, or "master-builder," prescribes the end of their art (the house or the theater). In the theater, the poet is the "architect" since he makes the plot, the "soul of tragedy" for the sake of which other artists, such as scene painters (*Poet*. 1450b17–20, 1453b1–11) or actors (1404a23–24), exercise their arts. (The principle obtains even though Aristotle was realistic enough to know that, in practice, star actors pushed poets around: 1451b33–52a1 and *Rhet*. 3.12 1413b9–12.) But in the city, the poet's art may be guided and controlled by the art of politics, the architectonic art par excellence that knows "the good for man" (*NE* 1.2). The principle that correctness in the art of poetry is not the same as in the art of politics thus has a flip side, which is that political "correctness" will prevail in public uses of poetry, including censorship in some contexts. (In Plato, too, the statesman has the right to censor imitative artists because his art is superior to theirs: *Rep*. 342c; cf. *Euthyd*. 291c.)

Because poetry is a social activity and has come to exist in cities, the poetic art may be made subordinate to political laws. Politics is entitled to determine which activities are to be permitted in the polis and with what limitations in order to promote the happiness of its citizens by equipping them to engage, insofar as they are able, in excellent activities (*Pol*. 1.2; 7.13, esp. 1332a7–21; *NE* 1.2.4–6). Some would therefore conclude that literary aesthetics is impossible, for it is "inherent in the nature of politics as Aristotle conceives it that there could not be a human activity that is not answerable to politics" (Heath 2009, 470 with n.3). Yet the principle of the poet's autonomy remains uncompromised in an essential way: it is important to note that the poet is subject to the statesman because of the architectonic supremacy of politics, not because the poetic art is fundamentally ethical or political in nature. One must never confound the principles governing the poetic art with those of its architectonic superior. Such authorities can in theory force the poet to make bad poetry (e.g. by insisting that tragedies have happy endings), but what they cannot do is make bad poetry good; expert though they be in politics, they are powerless to change the rules of the poetic art.

Ultimately, the autonomy of the poet derives from Aristotle's conception, inherited from the fifth century, that poetry is an art among others and, like them, has its own ends and methods. This means that, while poetic autonomy

outlines a sphere in which laws we may call aesthetic operate, the principle itself is not rooted in aesthetics, since it applies to other arts equally. Aristotle's defense of autonomy does not rely on positing a distinct realm of aesthetic experience; what he insists on is the distinctness of the arts: a doctor's practice can be regulated by political experts, but they cannot redefine the end of his art nor the best methods for pursuing it.

It is therefore unnecessary weaken the proclamation of poetic autonomy in *Poetics* Ch. 25 so as to reconcile it with Aristotle's conception of hierarchically nested arts and with the dominant ethical/political strand of ancient criticism. Conflicts among these agendas disappear if we consider the contexts in which this autonomy will be honored. The game of "problems" envisioned in Ch. 25 will not be played out in public spaces – Aristotle is clear that the principles of the art of poetry will not necessarily prevail in the theater and distinguishes between evaluating poetry "in terms of the art itself and in respect to its audiences" (1449a9). While audiences in their "weakness" (1453a34) may acclaim technically inferior works, and while political scientists may deplore or seek to control poetry's role in the city, knowledgeable adults may gather and talk about poetry in terms of the art itself. The problem game was a long-lived social entertainment with roots reaching back to symposia of the intellectual elite (Pfeiffer 1968, 69–71) and was a way for groups to negotiate a sense of "correctness" while observing "exacting rules of courtesy and self-control" (Johnson 2010, 12). Needless to say, even as putatively wise poets were being put to the test for correctness, it was the performers who were being evaluated for being "good at give and take" (*epidexioi*: Rhet. 2.1, 1381a29–35); they put their literary culture in play to demonstrate their forthright freedom of speech (*parrhesia*) and willingness to challenge authorities and to show ultimately their restraint and willingness to submit to norms that they agree to impose on themselves. As sympotic order was an imitation of civic order, the "correctness" of poetry in such contexts was an imitation, a copy with a difference, of "correctness" in the polis (Ford 2009).

Poetic Autonomy in Aristophanes' *Frogs*

Although the 25th chapter of *Poetics* is usually under-interpreted, it must be acknowledged as giving a strong defense of the poet's autonomy, one that detaches the "end" of the poetic art from reinforcing ethical or social values. But a problem remains as to why this view seems so isolated in the critical tradition. The picture becomes more filled in if we turn from Aristotle to Aristophanes and show that the philosopher was not expressing an idiosyncratic position of his own but deepening a line of thinking about poetic judging that had already been on display in Athens a generation earlier.

Aristophanes' *Frogs* is a comic masterpiece providing a precious glimpse,

albeit through a fun-house mirror, of self-consciously sophisticated literary criticism in the Classical age. The play devotes its second half to a duel between poets, as a traditionalist Aeschylus squares off against a modernist Euripides. For their critical pronouncements Aristophanes drew heavily on the high-flown discourses of Protagoras, Prodicus, and Gorgias – in other words, on classical criticism at the highest level (Segal 1970). Along with this perspective came the supposition that poetry is an art: Euripides is Aeschylus' rival in the art (*antitekhnos*, 816); it is in artistry that he claims to be superior (831). Their contest as a whole can be seen as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the "modern" proposition that technical correctness in poetry is something measurable (Ford 2002, 152–157). In the debate's scrutiny of poetic language (1119–1413), Aeschylus and Euripides use such terms as "error" (*hamartanein* 1135, 1137, 1147) and "correctness" (*orthotēs* 1181, 1131) to attack each other's verse, and when Euripides charges that there are 20 errors (*hamartiai*) in the first three verses of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* (1131), it recalls Aristotle's report of Protagoras, who faulted Homer for making two grammatical blunders in the first line of the *Iliad* alone (*Poet.* 19.1456b15–19).

Alongside these technical sallies is a great deal of discussion of the poets' piety, morality, and politics; indeed the ultimate decision between them is made on the basis of "which one gives better advice to the city" (1421–1422). As a whole, then, *Frogs* may be said to reflect the norm of the ancient critical tradition, confounding poetry's formal qualities with moral and social ones and giving the latter the trump hand. Early on in the contest the disputants agree that the purpose of poetry is to improve the audience. Asked why poets deserve admiration, Euripides volunteers, "For sophistication and wise advice [*nouthesia*]; and because we make men better in cities" (1009–1010). One might conclude that any aesthetic defense of poetry is thereby written off (Dover 1993, 318), but it may be unwise to single out any critical pronouncement as central to the play. In any case, we can recall the model of Protagoras again to see that to agree that poetry should make people better need not entail rejecting critical sophistication about language. Plato's Protagoras prized "correct usage" (*orthoepeia*) as "the most important part of education" and yet assumed that poets should provide wise advice (*nouthetēsis*: *Prot.* 325E–326A). Similarly in *Frogs* Euripides could agree with the idea, likely to have been widely voiced in Athens, that poets shape the character of citizens without conceding much: everything depended on how one defined goodness (Ford 2002, 197–201), and the play makes very clear that Euripides' idea of a well formed citizen was the very opposite of the fire-breathing warriors Aeschylus claims to have nurtured: sophisticated, talkative, sensitive, and unathletic, the pupil formed by Euripidean poetry looked a lot like an aesthete (cf. 945–67, 1069–1073). His politic concession, then, should not make us miss two rather aestheticizing moments in his self-defense.

The play's carnivalesque freedom makes it vain to seek in either poet a consistent critical position, but Aristophanes does draw a comic contrast between Aeschylus, standing on the whole for traditional poetry and traditional virtues like courage, and Euripides, championing modernism and the enlightened critique of convention (Hunter 2009, ch. 1). Accordingly, it is Euripides who focuses on formal elements in attacking Aeschylus, such as his diction (*phrasis*) or his prologues (1119ff.). In this light it seems significant that, when the two come to blows over specific passages, it is Euripides who comes near to claiming a poet's autonomy.

After a general exchange of insults the contestants get down to cases when Aeschylus adduces his fire-breathing *Seven Against Thebes* as an example of how he made the Athenians better. Calling it "full of Ares" (in a tag quoted from the sophist Gorgias: 1021), he boasts that the play made the Athenians burn to fight for their country. Dionysus interjects that this was a shame, since the play also emboldened the Thebans (Athens' formidable opponents during the Peloponnesian war: 1023–1024); this is only a wisecrack, but it points to a vulnerability in virtue-oriented criticism: one can readily agree that the *Seven* arouses patriotic fervor more than other plays, but that is a separate question from whether it is good for the city.

Aeschylus then contrasts his own "profiles in courage" (Jeffrey Henderson's nice rendering of 1040) with the "whores" Euripides has brought on stage: "By god I never created Phaedra's and Sthenoboea's, harlots, or ever portrayed a woman in a state of passion" (1043–1044). With a hint of prudishness, Aeschylus deplores two Euripidean characters notorious for illicit lust, Phaedra (for her stepson Hippolytus) and Sthenoboea (for Bellerophon, a guest in her husband's house); both women were rejected and accused their beloveds of rape with disastrous consequences. Euripides' reply to this charge is suggestive: "And what harm, you villain, did my Sthenoboea's do to the city?" (1049). Granting the premise that poets should make citizens virtuous, Euripides denies that representing morally depraved behavior must, in itself, corrupt an audience. This passing defense (reiterated in substance at 1064) is noteworthy for agreeing exactly with Aristotle: the philosopher would put it that portraying a heroine behaving badly is not per se an error in poetry, but may be correct if, in context, it contributes to the "end" of the play. Euripides, then, claims a certain autonomy for the poet, but without offering an aesthetic defense; to claim that there is value in aesthetic experience he would have had to go further and argue that watching a Sthenoboea might make men better citizens. But this is comedy and Aristophanes only lingers on an issue long enough to get a laugh and set up the next one. Nonetheless, the naive moralizing assumption that the behavior of a play's characters is carried directly over into the audience's lives is challenged, and the absurdity of Aeschylus' answer – "Your Bellerophon's made the respectable wives of respectable men commit suicide" (1050–1051)

– is perhaps a hint at the misguidedness of his critique.

The implication of Aeschylus' charge is that these lustful, suicidal heroines can lead to "copy cat" behavior, to which Euripides offers a different, equally suggestive defense: "But the story I told about Phaedra was already established, wasn't it?" (1052, tr. Henderson). In his previous response Euripides denied that representations of depraved behavior are blameworthy per se; he now entertains the premise that it would be harmful if people imitated (in its root sense of miming) such behavior, but replies that he didn't make up the story. If he'd made up the Phaedra myth, he implies, he might be culpable, but poets have license to avail themselves of the traditional stories. Once again, Euripides defends himself along lines recommended in *Poetics* 25: Aristotle would agree that, confronted with Phaedra as a problematic character, the obvious defense a poet might make is to say, "that's the way they tell the story."

To this, Aeschylus' retort is that the story may well be traditional, but one must consider its effects in shaping civic behavior. He closes the exchange by assuming the demeanor of a schoolmaster: the poet should conceal what is wicked, he says, not stage it; for what teachers are for the young, poets are for adults (1054–1056). It seems that Aeschylus' perspective is endorsed at the play's end when he wins the contest because the city needs the kind of men his plays produce. At the same time, there is more than a little push-back against this view, both in the Euripidean remarks underscored above and in the general portrayal of Aeschylus as a puritanical scold.

It is easy to recognize that Aeschylus adumbrates a pedagogical position that is given philosophical depth in the *Republic* when Plato argues that poetry in schools should be censored because of its power to shape moral character in the young (380A–C, 390A–B). It is less easy to see, but no less true, I hold, that the position assumed by Euripides is the same one that is argued comprehensively and rigorously by Aristotle in *Poetics* 25. The *Frogs*, produced for a mass audience, suggests that fifth-century technical criticism had already begun to formulate defenses poets might make against schoolmasters and other institutionalized "experts" in poetry who would interfere with their exercise of their craft. The question therefore arises, why do almost all the texts we classify as literary criticism assume a moral-political point of view? They ask, with Aristophanes' Aeschylus, whether it is good or bad for people to hear such things as the poets say, and this is because, again like Aeschylus, they tend to think of audiences as children. It is not only Book 3 of the *Republic* that worries over how young citizens should be taught poetry, but also the *Protagoras*, whose high-level critics perform before an audience of young men and who interpret Simonides' poem on virtue (*aretē*) by expecting it to conform to conventional morality. A good many of the familiar classics of criticism, from Horace's *Ars Poetica* to Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, are written with an eye toward young men as

consumers of poetry – often enough the actual sons of the writer and the addressee. The common agenda is, to quote a title of Plutarch's, "How a Young Person Should Listen to Poetry," a treatise written with a view to the education of Plutarch's son and the son of Marcus Sedatius. Plutarch explains in his preface that the impetuous nature (*phusis*) of the young (the *neos*) makes them enjoy poetry more readily than philosophic discourses (14e–15c). The treatise accordingly proposes to make reading poetry propaideutic to philosophy (15f) by showing how anything offensive in poetic portrayals of gods or human virtue may be reinterpreted or explained away (16d). Ultimately, Plutarch is leaning on Plato here, and thinks of poetry in terms of how it will affect what Plato called their "tender and highly impressionable young souls" (*Republic* 377E, cited at "How a Young Man" 3e–f).

The pedagogical approach to literature is abundantly preserved in the record because it was so useful to teachers, those great consumers and producers of books about literature. Works like "How a Young Person" (or *Republic* 3 for that matter) furnished teachers with methods and examples for combining erudition in poetry with an ethical and political stance that would appeal to the fathers who were paying tuition. In this tradition, *Poetics* Ch. 25 is exceptional in being for grownups. It is addressed to a select audience whose demands of poetry are quite different from what prevails in the classroom, or in theater; its audience is comparable to the select company the tragic poet Agathon invites to a symposium to celebrate his theatrical victory privately (*Symp*. 174A). In such a group, withdrawn from active engagement with civic duties and public business, one may apply a mutually agreed on conception of "correctness" as one discusses poetry. Here something like an aesthetic dimension of literature can be respected if one is willing to insist, as Aristotle did, that what is dictated by the art of poetry may trump objections raised by ethics or politics.

In a nutshell, the difference between Aristotle and the tradition exemplified in Plutarch is between an interest in what is technically correct in poetry (what the principles of art suggest will most effectively realize its nature and give it the best chance of succeeding) and an interest in correcting statements that offend against morals lest they corrupt the young. Aristophanes confirms that, despite the pedagogical slant of so many of our critical texts, the proposition that poetry is to be judged according to its own standards rather than by those of another art was far from unthinkable and was not recognized by academic philosophers alone.[4]

Conclusions

This essay has argued that readers of the *Poetics* should recognize its strong assertion of the poet's autonomy in Ch. 25, even if that autonomy was limited: it was not attached to a fully conceptualized literary aesthetics and did not

offer any basis for resisting political interference with the use of poetry in civic life. Despite these limitations, Aristotle's position suggests ways to rethink the possibility of literary aesthetics in the face of certain anti-aesthetic axioms that have taken root since the demise of deconstruction. For many academic critics today, aesthetics stands convicted as a mystified concept whose only use is to lay claim to a privileged social position; in its place, the discussion of literature in professional journals is dominated by political criticism (which claims to know the good for a community), with some help from ethical approaches (which claim to know the good for man). The academic debate taken as the point of departure for this chapter, whether there is such a thing as ancient aesthetics, is from this point of view an historicizing way of asking whether these methods have a right to exhaust the discussion of literature.

Poetics 25 first reminds us that political critiques of poetry are talking about something else than poetry. On a certain view of politics, there is nothing else to talk about; but Ch. 25 urges giving poets a hearing as poets by concentrating on the art of poetry. The exiled dissident artist Gao Xingjian would agree: "To demand that writers act as the conscience of the society can only strangle literature" (2012, 11). Having had first-hand experience with that political expert Mao Zedong, Gao insists that, "Once literature is contrived as the hymn of the nation, the flag of the race, the mouthpiece of a political party or the voice of a class or a group, it can be employed as a mighty and all-engulfing tool of propaganda. However, such literature loses what is inherent in literature, ceases to be literature, and becomes a substitute for power and profit" (2000).

In addition, political critics who are aware of how political power can insinuate its ideology as the correctness to which all must conform may reflect that, if literary studies are to be an intervention in politics, it would be a strategic error to abandon claims for artistic autonomy. If it is thought that literature does its greatest service when it speaks truth to power, it can only do so if it has first secured immunity to political criticism and the right of suppression it entails. An artistic critique aimed at the heart of a political system can only be produced and heard if many within that system are saying, with more or less good arguments, that the arts must be allowed to say what they please. Finally, this study has suggested that an important corollary of the poet's autonomy is that critics can thereby defend their own autonomy as readers, their freedom to find new interests and new conceptions of self and society. Whatever the political regime, a claim for autonomy is a claim that a place must be reserved where grown-ups may be allowed to hear and judge, in terms that they have negotiated for themselves, whatever may be said in art.

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FURTHER READING

The basis for any study of ancient criticism remains the primary texts, many of which are shrewdly selected and translated by D. Russell and M. Winterbottom (1972). A. Barker (1984–1989) performs a similar service for texts on ancient music, which was closely allied to poetry. A valuable overview is *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 1: *Classical Criticism*, edited by G. Kennedy (1989). Ford (2012) tracks the rise of literary theory from Homer through Aristotle. The collection of essays *Ancient Literary Criticism*, edited by A. Laird (2006), is an excellent guide to further research, not only for the 20 “classic” essays he reprints but for his judicious and up-to-date appendices listing further reading.

NOTES

1 Kristeller (1951, 506; 1980, 174); developed by W. Tatarkiewicz (1963), though his generalizations about Greek attitudes are vitiated by Romantic assumptions. Among many others, M.H. Abrams 1985/1989 builds on Kristeller and situates the rise of ideas about “art as such” in the context of eighteenth-century social and intellectual institutions. Kristeller is critiqued by Porter (2009), who is critiqued by Shiner (2009). For further discussion see esp. Halliwell’s work (on which more below).

2 The *Poetics* is cited by the standard Bekker numbers reproduced in most translations; I occasionally preface these with the chapter number for clarity. I use R. Kassel’s Oxford Classical text.

3 I leave out of this discussion my disagreement (as in Ford 2004) with those who identify *katharsis* with (moral) learning, as of ethical universals. Recent, nuanced arguments for this view, with bibliography, are Halliwell (2002, 172–176; 2011, 236–260) cf. Heath (2009).

4 On some later discussions of themes in *Poetics* Ch. 25, cf. Horace *AP* 347–360 with Brink: I.258–9, II.360–1, III.592–3; he points particularly to Cicero, *De or*. 1.14ff., Longinus 34.4, cf. Quintilian *IO* 12.1.19ff.

CHAPTER 10
Poetic Inspiration

Penelope Murray

> The Greek words for poetry and poet have a technological, not a metaphysical, still less a religious, significance. At the same time no people has had a stronger sense of the divine in poetry than the Greeks.
>
> Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 146

> "Art" never appears except in a tension between two concepts of art, one technical and the other sublime … It will not be pointless to recall what everyone knows: how the West came to speak of "art" and the "arts" after having spoken of the Muses.
>
> Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Muses*, 4

Inspiration and Craft

I begin with a paradox: the term *mousikē* appears to have been one of the first, if not *the* first, of the *technai* nouns formed in *–ikē*. The suffix *–ikē* implies *technē*, and the word *mousikē* means skill in the activities associated with the Muses,[1] such as those performed at the *mousikoi agōnes*, discussed above by Richard Martin. But the Muses' role in poetry, which remains their art par excellence, is largely unconcerned with *technē*. Their prime function as goddesses is to inspire their protégés, and to this day the Muse remains a general metaphor for artistic inspiration, which carries with it the implication of something beyond, or contrasted with, craft and technique. When the poet invokes the Muse he or she (we must not forget Sappho) is not appealing for technical help, but rather for some other quality, be it knowledge of past events, access to truths normally hidden from human minds, the immortalization of the subject of the poem, or the enhancement of its performance; in short, some quality which lies beyond the poet's own powers. Poetic performance, with its concomitant components of song, music, and dance, requires something more than technical ability, and the Muses supply that element. Inspiration and craft might be thought to offer contrasting models of the poet's activity, the one deriving from a divine source, the other dependent on human expertise. But for the poets of early Greece there was no incompatibility between the two, and their claims to inspiration were balanced by an equal emphasis on skill and craftsmanship (Murray 1981; Brillante 2009, 23–29; Halliwell 2011, 55–57). Already in the *Odyssey* (17.382–385) the bard is included in a list of *dēmiourgoi* (skilled workmen), together with the seer, the healer, and the carpenter, all of whom have specialized skills of

use to the community at large. When the bard Phemius has to justify his existence to Odysseus (*Od*. 22.347–8), he does so on the grounds that he is *autodidaktos*, "self-taught," a word which clearly implies that there is an element of skill in the poet's activity. At *Od*. 11.368 Alcinous praises Odysseus for telling his story *epistamenōs* (that is, skillfully) like a bard. And Odysseus himself praises Demodocus for singing of the fate of the Achaians *kata kosmon* (*Od*. 8.489–91), a phrase which refers as much to the form as to the content of the song: it is both true and well structured (see below). The importance of skill in poetry in the early period is also apparent from the repeated use of skill words vis-à-vis poetry: *oida*, *epistamai*, *sophos*, *sophia*, *technē*, and from the frequency of references to the teaching and learning of poetry, indeed the Muses themselves are said to teach poets (e.g. Hom. *Od*. 8.481; Hesiod, *Theogony* 22), which suggests the communication of expertise. The use of the word *poiētēs* to mean poet, and the whole vocabulary of "making" which developed in the fifth century, is evidently based on the notion of the poet as craftsman (Ford 2002, 131–139; Notomi 2011, 301–304), but whilst the terminology may be new, the idea has its roots in earlier Indo-European traditions (West 2007, 35–36), and is already implicit in the imagery of early Greek poetry.

Craft metaphors are particularly frequent in the poetry of Bacchylides and Pindar, where the poet is described as builder, carpenter, or sculptor and we find elaborate metaphors in which poems are figured as splendid palaces or radiant treasure houses impervious to the battering of wind or rain (e.g. Pindar, *Olympian* 6.1–4; *Pythian* 6.5–18, and Steiner, in this volume). Scholars point out that the proliferation of craft metaphors in connection with poetic activity in the fifth century is a symptom of the changing status of the poet, who is increasingly seen as an artisan seeking a commission from an employer (Svenbro 1984). But it is important to note that poets always present themselves as being *superior* to artisans, not least through the imagery of inspiration, their traditional prerogative. Alongside the vocabulary of craft we find an equal emphasis on the importance of the Muse, as, for example at Pindar, *Ol.* 3.4–6 : "… the Muse stood beside me as I found a newly shining way to join to Dorian measure a voice of splendid celebration," or at *Ol*. 7.7–8 where his song is described as simultaneously the gift of the Muses and the product of his own mind. Or compare the opening of *Nemean* 3 where the chorus of young men, "the builders of honey-sounding revels," stand waiting for the voice of the Muse, and the poet prays that she grants "an abundance of song from his skill." Pindar draws attention to his own role in the celebration of the victor, but at the same time he is careful to include the divine presence of the Muse in his self-presentation as poet. The Muse in fact is vital to the construction of poetic identity in the Archaic Greek world, for it is the Muse who guarantees the poet's status as a professional and a public figure. In the more private sphere of the symposium we find fewer references to Muses, no doubt in part because in this context the poet presents himself as part of a

group (see Steiner above), as one among equals rather than as spokesman for the community. But in the grander genres of epic, epinician, and choral lyric it is the inspiration of the Muse that gives the poet his authority.

Muse-inspired poetry can also be a craft, as the early Greek poets testify. But that did not prevent Plato from exploiting an underlying tension between these two conceptions of poetry whose reverberations have been felt in the history of aesthetics ever since. The key text is Plato's little dialogue *Ion*, which, together with passages from the *Phaedrus*, is the *locus classicus* for the idea of artistic inspiration in the Western tradition (Clark 1997; Roe and Stanco 2007). In the great speech which lies at the heart of the *Ion* (533d–535a), Plato presents us with the archetypal image of the inspired poet: a light, winged, and airy creature, he is unable to compose until he is out of his mind, possessed and in a state of enthusiasm, his power completely dependent on the Muse. Like mindless Corybantic worshippers, or Bacchic women who draw milk and honey from rivers in their frenzy, so the poets are not in their right minds when they compose their poems. As with seers and prophets, the Muse takes away the poet's senses and uses him as a mouthpiece for the god's message so that the poems he utters are "not human, and of men, but divine and of the gods" (534e2–4). What is emphasized by this dazzling collage of imagery is the total passivity of the poet. Repeatedly the point is made that the mental state of the inspired poet, described as *entheos* (literally "having a god inside"), out of his mind (*ekphrōn*), and possessed (*katechomenos*),[2] is incompatible with technical expertise or mastery of a skill (*technē*). Poets utter their fine words not through skill or knowledge, but impelled by a divine force.

A similar though not identical picture emerges from the *Phaedrus*, where poetic inspiration is described as a form of divine madness (*theia mania*) emanating from the Muses (245a). This madness and possession (*katokōchē*, a word Plato uses only here and at *Ion* 536c2) takes hold of the poet's soul, rousing it to Bacchic frenzy to produce poetry which glorifies the deeds of the past and educates the coming generations. "Whoever comes to the doors of poetry without the madness of the Muses, persuaded that he will be a good enough poet through skill [*technē*], is himself unfulfilled, and the sane man's poetry is eclipsed by that of the insane [the *mainomenos*]." In this case skill and inspiration are contrasted, but, unlike the *Ion*, the *Phaedrus* does not suggest that poets are incapable of composing through *technē*: rather, it claims that poetry inspired by the madness of the Muses is infinitely superior to anything that a mere mortal can produce. The best poetry is inspired, as we also know from the example of the unfortunate Tynnichus in the *Ion* (534d–e) who never composed anything worth mentioning apart from his famous paean, which was literally "an invention of the Muses." But in that case, what room is left for human agency? What kind of activity is involved in the production of a poem? And how do conceptions of inspiration and technique

relate to the question of value in poetry?

I begin with inspiration, a broad and changing concept which has meant different things at different times, but which is in essence concerned with the genesis of the poetic (Clark 1997, 282). In its oldest form it belongs to the cluster of ideas associated with breathing as a means of communication between gods and men, and in several Indo-European traditions we find poetry linked with breath or wind. But our *word* "inspiration" is in some ways rather misleading so far as conceptions of poetry in early Greece are concerned. Deriving from the Latin *inspirare*, to "blow or breathe into," the term was deployed by Christian Latin writers from the third century AD onward of the workings of the Holy Spirit, particularly in relation to the utterances of prophets, apostles, and the writings of Scripture (Ziolkowski 1990, 26–29). The biblical overtones of the *inspiration* word-group, with their implication that the human recipient is nothing but an empty vessel waiting to be filled, merely a vehicle for the voice of God, are not altogether helpful to our understanding of the situation in the world of Archaic Greece. In that world, as in many other cultures, the belief in breaths as a medium of contact between divinity and humankind is indeed widespread. In the Homeric poems a god or a *daimōn* is often said to breathe *menos* (strength or spirit) into a warrior (e.g. *Il*. 10.482), and in the *Odyssey* (19.138), Penelope says that it was a *daimōn* who first breathed into her the idea of weaving the web. Other mental states which are attributed to the breath of god include battle frenzy (Aesch. *Sept*. 63, 115, 344), love (Aesch. *Supp*. 17,44; Eur. *Iph. Aul*. 69; Ar. *Lys*. 551–552), and madness (Aesch. *Prom*. 884; Eur. *Bacch*. 1094). Divine breath was also said to be the source of Cassandra's prophetic frenzy (Aesch. *Ag*. 1206; Eur. *Iph. Aul*. 757–761). But "breathing" words are used very rarely in relation to poetry. According to Clement of Alexandria, Democritus (fr. 18) is credited with saying that "whatever a poet writes under the influence of enthusiasm and the divine spirit [*hierou pneumatos*] is very beautiful." But the phrase *hieron pneuma* looks somewhat suspicious when coming from the pen of a Christian writer, and we cannot be sure that he is quoting verbatim from the original source.[3] The only certain instance of poetic inspiration in the literal sense before Plato is in the *Theogony* (31–32) where Hesiod describes how the Muses breathed into him a "wondrous voice" *(audēn thespin*), giving him the ability to sing of the future and the past, and to celebrate the gods who live for ever. Of course, the absence of breathing words in such contexts in early Greek poetry may simply be due to the accident of survival. But I wonder if it might not tell us something about attitudes to poets and the nature of their abilities during this period. Breathing images are typically used to depict the sudden access of power or a temporary heightened state which the god imparts, but in Hesiod's case what the Muses breathe into him is a wonderful voice, that is, a faculty with which he is permanently endowed. This fits in with the general picture that we have of the active role of the poet in the exercise of his craft before Plato, where Muses may love poets, teach

them, or give them the gift of poetry (Finkelberg 1998, 34–49; Nünlist 1998, 326–328; Halliwell 2011, 56–57), but the recipients of their favors retain some control over what they do.

The poet depicted in the *Ion*, by contrast, is completely passive and dependent on the Muse, who uses him simply as a mouthpiece. His poems may be fine (*kala*), but, being possessed by the god, he is incapable of understanding the words that he utters. Plato maintains a link with traditional notions of inspiration, not least through his highly skillful adaptation of imagery which poets themselves deploy, but his quasi-mythical account transforms the poet into a mindless automaton through whom the Muses speak rather than an active participant in the process of composition. Aristophanes had already exploited the paradoxical possibilities inherent in the image of the inspired poet to comic effect in the scene in the *Acharnians* where Dicaeopolis calls on Euripides to ask for his help. A servant answers the door and the following exchange takes place:

> Dicaeopolis:
>
> Is Euripides in [*endon*]?
>
> Servant:
>
> He's in and not in, if you see what I mean.
>
> Dicaeopolis:
>
> How can he be in and not in?
>
> Servant:
>
> No problem, old man. His mind [*nous*] is out [*exō*] collecting versicles so he's not in, but he himself is in, with his feet up, composing [*poiei*] a tragedy. (*Ach*. 395–399).

This vignette plays on the notion of the mental absence of the poet, but without suggesting that he is witless or passive; on the contrary, his mind is actively collecting material for the tragedy which he alone is responsible for composing. No Muse or god is mentioned as an alternative source of inspiration. Plato takes a leaf out of Aristophanes' book in taking the poets at their word and interpreting their metaphors literally (*Ion* 534b3), but he comes up with a very different picture: if the poet is inspired, he must have a god in him; if he has a god in him, his own mind must be out, and therefore he must be out of his mind (534b5–6), an inference that Aristophanes does *not* make: in that case his poetry comes from somewhere other than himself and he is not responsible for what he says. The crucial difference between Plato and his predecessors in this respect is that he denies any form of agency to the poet, which cannot but deprive him of authority.

Inspiration and Authority

The earlier concept of poetic inspiration is closely bound up with claims to authority. When poets speak of the Muses as the source of their poetry, they are not interested in explaining their motivation or telling us what makes them compose, but rather in establishing their credentials vis-à-vis their audience. The exclusive relationship with the Muse, however that is figured, gives the poet access to truth, knowledge, and wisdom which is hidden from ordinary mortals, and confers on him a privileged status as spokesman for the community. So, for example, when Hesiod describes his meeting with the goddesses on Mount Helicon (*Theog*. 22–34), regardless of how we view its authenticity (Most 2006 , xii–xix), his account should not be interpreted as a record of a private experience, but rather as a symbolic statement through which he stakes his claim to the authority that the inspiration of the Muses traditionally bestows. Plato's focus on the psychology of the poet, and particularly his emphasis on the irrationality of the poetic process, effectively undermines that claim by denying the poet knowledge. Whereas Pindar's Muse, for example, vouchsafes him wisdom which contrasts with the ignorance of the masses (e.g. *Paean* 6. 51–8), Plato's poet has exactly the opposite experience: the Muse takes away his wits and renders him incapable of understanding what he says. Inspiration becomes synonymous with ignorance on the part of the poet, as we see very clearly from the *Apology* (22a–c), where Socrates sets out to investigate the meaning of the Delphic oracle's pronouncement that there was no one wiser than himself. Deciding that he would approach the problem by questioning people with a reputation for wisdom, he went first to the politicians, and then to the poets. But when he asked them about their poems, he found that almost any one of those who were present could speak better than they about the poems that they themselves had composed. He concluded therefore that poets composed their poems not through wisdom (*sophia*), but by nature (*phusis*) and that they were inspired (*enthousiazontes*), like seers and soothsayers, who "say many fine (*kala*) things, but know nothing of what they say." There is not quite the same relentless focus on the irrationality of the poet's mental state here as in the *Ion*, and the notion of *phusis* introduces an alternative explanation for the poet's gift (Murray 1989, 14–18; Ford 2002, 170–172; Scott 2011, 152–153), but the essential point, that poets are ignorant *because* they are inspired, or perhaps, more accurately, *since* they are ignorant, they must be inspired, remains the same.

Neither the *Apology* nor the *Ion* suggests that the products of inspiration are anything other than "fine" (*kala*); indeed the divine origin of the poet's utterances accounts for their value (Heath 2013, 141–150). But in what does that value consist? A large part of the *Ion* is taken up with the question of what it is that the rhapsode knows, and, by implication, what it is that the poet knows (532c8–9). Ion is a top performer, winning prizes for his displays, but

when it comes to explaining what is actually involved in his art and how he achieves his success, he is at a loss. Socrates proceeds to question him as if there were a distinctive area of expertise covered by the rhapsode's activity, and he mentions rhapsodic *technē* no less than eight times in the course of the dialogue (538b4, c5, d5, 539e3, 540a2, a5, d4, 541a1–2). But since he rejects all Ion's attempts to define it and offers no account of it himself, we are left to conclude that there is no such thing. Ion is an expert in Homer, and claims to know about all the subjects found in his epics. Does that mean he knows all about chariot driving, medicine, fishing, prophecy, and so on? Of course not. Socrates points out that in the case of each of these specialized arts about which Homer speaks, the practitioner will be a better judge of the poet's words than the rhapsode, and Ion is forced to agree. When he attempts to suggest that expertise in poetry is not identical with knowledge of its subject matter, Socrates brushes this aside. But his statement that a rhapsode will know "the sorts of things that it is appropriate for a man to say, what a woman should say, what a slave or a freeman or a subject or a ruler should say" (540b3–5) is at least the beginnings of an answer, and hints at the possibility that there is more to the problem of expertise in poetry than Socrates allows him to articulate (Schaper 1968, 33; Janaway 1995, 29–31). Socrates, however, ignores him, and continues with his interrogation (would he know better than a pilot what a pilot would say in a storm at sea? better than a doctor what should be said to a sick person?, and so on), as if rhapsodic skill would need to include knowledge of all the specialized skills portrayed in poetry, a hypothesis which would (i) prove impossible in practice and (ii) leave no room for an area of expertise which was exclusively the rhapsode's. By the end we are none the wiser concerning the nature of Ion's activity or what it is that makes poetry a distinctive field of study. Ion chooses to be thought inspired, but few would argue that we should accept this as a serious explanation for his ability in the performance of his art.

In fact Socrates seems keener to establish that Ion possesses no *technē* than to examine the idea of inspiration as the source of his success. The basis of his argument is that the poetry which Ion recites and/or comments on (Socrates deliberately blurs these two aspects of his activity; Rijksbaron 2007, 124–128) deals with subjects about which he himself is ignorant. But if that is true of the rhapsode, it must also be true of the poet, as we know from the *Republic*, where the contention that poets must understand the subjects on which they compose their poems is at the heart of Plato's critique of poetry (*Rep*. 598e). Here, however, Socrates appears to have nothing but praise for poets with his extravagant description of the inspiration they experience and the fine words they utter as the Muse speaks through them. The model adopted is essentially a religious one: god speaks through the poet as Apollo would through a prophet, recalling the old analogy between poetry and prophecy which poets themselves exploit in their invocations to the Muse for knowledge of matters hidden from mortal eyes. Implicit in Plato's use of this imagery is the idea of

truth: if god speaks through the poet then what he says must be true, the supernatural origin of his poetry guaranteeing its veracity. But the emphasis on the irrationality of the poetic process, and the stark opposition which Plato draws between inspiration and knowledge, inevitably undermines the poet's status as a figure of authority. We must also take into account the context of Socrates' mythical flight of fantasy on the subject of poetic inspiration. Significantly, it is introduced by the image of the magnet (533d3), which links together the various elements in the chain of poetic communication from Muse to poet to rhapsode to audience. All are presented as part of the same process, and that makes it difficult to separate out our judgment of the poet's activity from that of Ion himself, whom Socrates specifically refers to as the middle ring suspended from the magnet at 535e9.

Ion is treated by Socrates with heavy irony throughout, and any idea that he might be genuinely inspired is effectively undercut when Socrates asks him about his mental state during performances (535b–e6). Ion readily agrees that he must be out of his mind, for when he is reciting pitiful or terrifying scenes from the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*, his eyes fill with tears, his hair stands on end, and his heart thumps, even though he is standing amongst an audience of more than twenty thousand friendly people. Is he aware, asks Socrates, that he produces the same effect on his audience? Very much so, replies Ion, for he can look down from the platform and see people weeping, and gazing at him with amazement at this story. "It's very important that I pay attention to them" (*ton noun prosechein*, lit. "turn my mind"), he says (535e4), "since if I make them cry, I shall be laughing at the money I'll make, but if I make them laugh, I'll be the one crying because of the money I'll lose." The experience which Ion describes is not in itself implausible, for feigned emotion could be said to lie at the heart of the theatrical art, a paradox which Shakespeare so memorably encapsulated in Hamlet's words:

Is it not monstrous, that this player here,

But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,

Could force his soul so to his whole conceit,

That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;

Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,

A broken voice, and his whole function suiting,

With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing.

For Hecuba! What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,

That he should weep for her? (*Hamlet*, act 2, scene 2)

An actor's ability to throw himself into a part and to feel the emotions of the

character he plays is perfectly compatible with an awareness of an audience's reactions. But Ion's ready admission that he has to apply his mind to the task of manipulating the responses of his audience puts paid to any idea that he might be inspired by a god, which, according to Socrates' definition, necessarily involves total passivity on the part of the recipient. The earlier religious model of inspiration is here replaced by a theatrical one, hinting at something fraudulent about Ion's performance, whose power, it transpires, depends less on divine inspiration than on an all too human concern with money. This negative portrayal of the rhapsode must surely have some bearing on the way we view the poet, but how far we should press the analogy between the two is more or less anyone's guess: Plato leaves us in a genuine state of *aporia*.

Inspiration and Value

However, to claim that the dialogue adopts an "uncompromisingly negative attitude toward poetry" (Rijksbaron 2007 , 12) and that its sole purpose is to "expose him [Ion] as an ignorant mouthpiece of an equally ignorant poet" (ibid. 109, n.188) is to ignore the subtlety and ambivalence of Plato's writing. Socrates' dazzling speech on inspiration is, after all, the center and high point of the piece, and I don't think we can dismiss it as nothing more than an ironic pastiche designed to show that poets lack *technē*. It opens up the prospect of a more positive view of poetic activity, or at the very least a more complex view, than emerges from the questioning of the rhapsode. With its elaborate imagery and metaphorical paraphernalia, it hints that poetry operates in a different mode from that of rational discourse, and is in itself a demonstration of the possibilities of the poetic. Poets may not know what they are saying, but they *are* saying something. And the talk of Muses and god-inspired utterance suggests that what they say is of value. We are given little indication of where that value might lie, but if the notion of divine inspiration is taken seriously (how to *read* Plato is, of course, the crucial question), the issue of truth must arise. Scott (2011, 133–134) emphasizes this point, arguing that "Socrates would insist that the god can never utter falsehood" (134). But I wonder if Socrates might also remember what Hesiod tells us, that the Muses do sometimes lie (*Theogony* 27–28). Commentators are, and always have been, divided on the interpretation of Socrates' speech, but the problem to which the mythical account of the Muses' inspiration points is that of the status of poetry and the standards by which we should measure it, for the truth claims of poetry, it seems, are of a different order from that of other types of discourse (Liebert 2010; Halliwell in this volume).

When poets "speak finely," what are we to understand by that term? Janaway (1995, 33–34) points to a tension between two senses of "speaking finely" which run through the dialogue: one involves speaking correctly about content, and depends on knowledge or *technē*, as outlined above (for the

rhapsode or poet to speak correctly about, for example, doctors, he would need to understand the *technē* of medicine); the other involves speaking beautifully, which has nothing to do with questions of accuracy or correctness, but relates to the quality and power of performance. To speak finely in this sense, according to Janaway, is to give pleasure to an audience by involving their emotions in the immediacy of the performance, an ability which comes not from *technē* but from the Muse, who inspires in her human mouthpiece "a power which enables the production of beauty" (1995, 34). The notion of beauty raises problems of its own (see Konstan in this volume), but the powerful emotional effect of poetry, traditionally recognized as a major factor in its appeal, undoubtedly has some bearing on the way we are to understand what is meant by Socrates' talk of the "fineness" of the poet's words. When he questions Ion about his experience of moving his audience to tears in the passage referred to above (535b–e), he asks the rhapsode:

> When you give a good recital and especially stun your audience – when you sing of Odysseus leaping on the threshold, revealing himself to the suitors and pouring forth arrows at his feet, or of Achilles rushing at Hector, or one of the pitiful passages about Andromache of Hecuba or Priam – are you then in your right mind, or are you beside yourself? Does your soul, in its enthusiasm, think that it is present at those events which you describe, whether in Ithaca or in Troy or wherever the epic sets the scene?
>
> (535b2–c3).

We might infer from this that it is the authenticity of his performance which involves the emotions of the audience: his ability to imagine himself at the scenes he describes makes them feel as though they too are present at the events they are witnessing, and this is what moves them so (Sheppard in this volume). The effect depends not so much on the factual accuracy of his portrayal but on a property of poetic experience which Homer too attributed to the inspiration of the Muse. As Odysseus says to Demodocus, it must have been a Muse or Apollo who taught him, so beautifully did he sing of the fate of the Achaeans (*liēn gar kata kosmon*), as if he himself had been present or had heard it from someone else (that is, someone else who was present, *Od*. 8. 486–91). The Muses themselves are omnipresent, as the poet of the *Iliad* tells us in his appeal for inspiration before the catalogue of ships: "you are goddesses, you are present and know all things, whereas we hear only report [*kleos*] and know nothing" (*Il*. 2.485–460). Here the bard, a mere mortal, needs the Muses' knowledge in order to name accurately all the leaders who came to Troy. But the phrase *kata kosmon* in the earlier example goes beyond the notion of factual correctness to include shape and structure, suggesting that Demodocus' song is perfectly formed to produce the effect that it has. Odysseus weeps at the evocation of a past in which he himself had participated, not so much because it is a factual account, but because of the

authentic quality of the bard's performance, which brings to life the fate of the Achaeans as if he had himself witnessed all that they did and suffered. Ion too transports his audience to the scenes he describes, engaging their emotions in the imagined world he sets before them, and the skepticism with which Socrates treats his alleged inspiration does not alter the fact that poetry has this power of vivid immediacy, a power that distinguishes it from other forms of discourse.[4] Plato may not like it – indeed we know from the *Republic* that he found it extremely dangerous – but he recognizes its existence. None of this, of course, is spelt out in the *Ion*, which merely hints at the power of poetry and its effects. But the central metaphor of inspiration raises broader questions about the nature of the poetic art than those which the dialogue discusses (Schaper 1968, 50–51).

Poetry, *Technē*, and *Poiēsis*

One thing that does emerge pretty clearly from the *Ion* is that poetry is not a *technē*. The practice of poetry, whether at the level of performance or of composition, is shown to depend on irrational processes, which are incompatible with the basic requirements of a *technē*, here defined by Socrates as a distinct area of activity embodying rational principles which the practitioner can extrapolate and apply to the field as a whole. He adopts the same strategy with poets as he does with rhapsodes, that is, he proceeds as if there were such a thing as a *technē* of poetry, saying at 532c8–9: "there is, I suppose, an art of poetry as a whole?"[5] But his refusal to discuss what such a *technē* might entail and his repeated insistence on the irrationality of poetic inspiration suggests that this is a rhetorical ploy, designed to cast doubt on traditional assumptions about the nature of the poet's art. Janaway argues that Socrates genuinely assumes the existence of a poetic *technē* on the grounds that it is specifically the fineness or beauty of poetry that the Muses inspire: although good poets and performers cannot explain their success, some measure of technical competence is nevertheless essential to their activities.[6] But this interpretation is hard to reconcile with Socrates' emphasis on the rhapsode's, and by implication the poet's, lack of knowledge, and the contrast which he draws between poetry and all the other fields of expertise he discusses (painting, sculpture, chariot-driving, medicine, seafaring, and so on). The case of Tynnichus, it is true, complicates the sharp opposition between inspiration and *technē* which the dialogue sets up since it implies some active involvement on the part of the poet in the making of poems which are not inspired by the Muse (534d, referred to above). But having the basic knowhow to put together an instantly forgettable poem hardly suggests that he is the practitioner of a *technē*, least of all in the sense that the dialogue understands that term. By using the standard language of making (*epoiēse poiēma*, 534d6), Socrates pays lip service to the traditional view of poetry as a craft, but rather than endorsing that view, he ignores the technical aspects of

poetry – meter, form, style, and so on – and concentrates instead on undermining the notion that poets have knowledge of a more general kind. As Janaway puts it (1995, 31): "knowing in detail how to construct and enunciate hexameters is not evidence of knowing anything else." Plato is not interested in the mechanics of poetry, but in the authority of poets.

This remains true, I think, throughout Plato's work, despite the occasional reference to poetic *technē* and the acknowledgment from time to time that the practice of poetry demands some form of technical competence (Halliwell 2011, 178–179). The poets in the *Republic* who are going to be compelled to "embody the image of good character in their poems" (401b) must, after all, have the knowhow to do so.[7] Some such common-sense view concerning the practicalities of composition is also implied in the *Laws*, where poets are going to be needed in Plato's Cretan city to follow the guidelines laid down by the legislators and compose poetry for all the citizens to sing. That poets require expertise in formal matters is explicitly stated in the discussion of good and bad writing in the *Phaedrus* 268c–d (Heath in this volume), where Socrates points out the defects of sophistic rhetorical treatises, which, he argues, are concerned with the antecedents of the art of rhetoric rather than with the *technē* itself. It is as if a man thought he could become a doctor simply by picking up something from a book, or coming across some drug or other, without any real knowledge of the *technē* of medicine. Again, how would Sophocles and Euripides respond to someone who supposed he could compose a tragedy (and teach someone else how to do so) simply on the basis of knowing how to produce pathetic, frightening, or menacing speeches? They would laugh at anyone who thought that tragedy was "anything other than the structure of those elements, appropriately constructed relative both to each other and to the whole" (268d), replies Phaedrus. Here tragedy is indeed treated as a *technē*, with the emphasis on formal design, on a par with medicine and music, and Sophocles and Euripides are presented as masters of their craft. But the argument is designed specifically to appeal to Phaedrus whose views are entirely conventional, and the status of tragedy is not the subject of serious investigation (Yunis 2011, 203–205). The same could be said of the passage right at the end of the *Symposium* (223d) where Socrates is holding forth to the only people still awake at the end of the party, Agathon and Aristophanes. He is forcing them to agree that a man who knew how to compose a comedy could also compose a tragedy, that a skilled tragic poet would also be a comic poet. Here again we have the language of skill deployed in relation to the composition of tragedy (and comedy), but the context suggests that we should think twice before taking it at face value. Socrates is addressing his words to a tragic and a comic poet respectively, neither being a composer of both tragedy and comedy: the fact that each composes only one genre of poetry might indicate that what they practice is not a skill after all because, if it were, they would each be able to do both. But in any case there is no real discussion here of what it might mean to "know

how to compose" (*epistasthai poiein*, *Smp*. 223d, cf. *Phaedr*. 268c), a question left hanging in the air as first Aristophanes and then Agathon nod off to sleep.

The issue of what sort of expertise, if any, the poet has also arises in the *Apology* (22d) where Socrates declares that manual craftsmen make the same mistake as poets and other good workmen in assuming that their expertise in a particular *technē* makes them wise in other matters too, a statement which clearly reflects the standard view that poetry is a craft-based activity. But his primary concern, as I argued above, is to show that poets are ignorant about the matters of which they speak, and it is significant that whereas Socrates recognizes the genuine expertise of craftsmen, who, he says, are wiser than himself in respect of their technical knowledge, he pays no such compliment to the poets. Whatever skill it is that poets possess, they remain incapable of explaining what they do, which suggests something distinctly odd about the nature of their supposed craft.

A similarly equivocal picture emerges from the *Symposium* where the poet is presented as the exemplar of a "maker." Diotima, seeking to clarify the difference between generic and specific meanings of the terminology of love, finds an analogy in the vocabulary of making. *Poiēsis*, in a general sense, as she explains (*Smp*. 205b–c), refers to "any activity which causes something to come into being from non-being, and therefore covers the productions of all the *technai*," whilst those who engage in producing these works (the *dēmiourgoi*) are all of them "makers," that is, *poiētai*. But in current parlance, she continues, these terms are used in a narrower sense to denote poetry and poets, despite their potentially wider significance. Diotima states this as a matter of fact here, without any comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of contemporary linguistic practice, which designates poetry a *technē* and the poet as a "maker" par excellence.

Later on in the dialogue, however, these "makers" turn out also to be begetters of "immortal offspring," which implies a rather more elevated conception of their role than that of mere producers or technicians: these are *dēmiourgoi* with a difference. In her disquisition on the nature of love, Diotima declares that the motivation of all *erōs* is procreative, an impulse which springs from the longing for immortality and lasting renown that is present in all human beings (207c–d). Those whose creative instinct is physical have recourse to women and produce children, but these mortal offspring of the body are far inferior to the progeny of the soul, generated by the union of beautiful minds. What is the progeny of the soul? "It is wisdom and virtue in general; of this all poets are begetters [*gennētores*], as are such craftsmen [*dēmiourgoi*] as may be said to be inventive [*heuretikoi*], but by far the most important and the finest type of wisdom is that which is concerned with the regulation of cities and households, whose name is moderation and justice" (209a3–8).

Although poets do not rank as highly as law-givers here, their poems are

valued for the wisdom they contain (a traditional view, albeit presented in a highly original manner), and Homer and Hesiod take pride of place in Diotima's eulogy of the soul's immortal offspring in comparison with mere children of the flesh: "anyone," she says, "would envy Homer, Hesiod and the other good poets the children they have left behind them, such is the immortal fame and glory they bring to their parents" (209d). This is a novel way of expressing the traditional topos of poetry's immortalizing powers, but we are left none the wiser about the nature of the poet's activity. The poet may be a maker, but how he produces his "immortal offspring" remains something of a mystery. Indeed for Rijksbaron the *Symposium* provides further evidence of Plato's conviction that poets have no faculty for composing poetry: there is no such thing as poetic craft, rather, it is all a matter of *mania* and inspiration, as in the *Ion* and *Phaedrus*, or of "procreation," as in the *Symposium* (209a4), but this, according to Rijksbaron "can hardly be called a rational activity either" (2007, 11 n.20). Whilst the extent to which Plato does or does not credit poets with "the faculty of composing poetry" is debatable (the language of "making" does, after all, imply agency), Rijksbaron is right to draw attention to the gap or mismatch between the notions of "making" and "procreating." Whatever *technē* or craftsmanship the poet has remains obscure, for the metaphor of procreation is as elusive as that of inspiration as an explanation for the poet's activity, despite all the talk of the poet "making" poems.

Scott (2011, 140–143) sees in the imagery of the *Symposium* a contrasting model of creativity from that of the *Ion* in that Diotima's poet depends on resources within himself rather than on the external inspiration of a god. Everyone is pregnant, both in body and soul (206c), so that poems, no less than children, are the product of what is already inside the poet, even if the process of giving birth can only take place in the presence of beauty, which acts as a catalyst for the experience. Creativity thus involves an interaction between internal and external factors. Furthermore, the lover and his beloved are said to nurture what they have brought to birth (209c4), an image which, when applied to poets, might suggest a greater degree of agency than does the *Ion*. "The most plausible way of cashing out the metaphor," Scott argues (143), "is that the poet, with the help of his beloved, subjects his initial ideas to a process of elaboration and development." The *Symposium* would therefore open up space for some kind of "critical control" on the part of the poet, suggesting the possibility of a more nuanced account of artistic creativity than the Ion's exclusive emphasis on the mysterious workings of inspiration. Perhaps this is so, but that makes it all the more surprising, particularly in view of Diotima's focus on the poet as maker at 205b–c, that we hear so little about the poet's active role in shaping his material. What emerges instead is a notion of *poiēsis* that is not synonymous with artful construction, the imagery of procreation picking up on Agathon's earlier claim (196e–197c) that Love himself is not only a god and a poet, but also the

"maker" of all forms of life, the means through which all living things come into being. The idea of "making" is here replaced by that of procreation, a natural process of engendering and bringing to birth that is also divine (206c). Rather than endorsing the standard view of poetry as a craft and the poet as craftsman, such imagery might be taken to suggest that poetry operates in a way that bypasses *technē*.

In the *Symposium* the non-technical nature of the poet's activity is merely implied. But the question of what it is that the poet makes and how he makes it is central to the analysis of *poiēsis* in the *Republic* (596a–597e, with Notomi 2011, 317–321), where Plato distinguishes between three types of making, that of god, the craftsman, and the poet respectively. The poet is relegated to the lowest rank, at third remove from reality since all he makes are images of appearances, easily, like a man with a mirror, in contrast with the craftsman who uses his skill to manufacture serviceable objects. As a mere imitator the poet (*poiētēs*) is unworthy of the name of "maker," and the imitations that he produces are of little worth in comparison with the products of the genuine craftsman. The poet's lack of *technē* is as evident here as it is in the *Ion,* but whereas the *Republic* denigrates the poet for this lack, the *Ion*, ostensibly at any rate, celebrates it.

The idea of inspiration is notably absent from the discussion of poetry in the *Republic* where the poet himself is solely responsible for the images he creates. But inspiration, *mimēsis*, and *technē* come together in the celebrated image of the poet sitting on the Muse's tripod at *Laws* 719c, an image of utter irrationality (the poet is out of his mind, gushing like a spring, contradicting himself and not knowing which of his words are true) which at the same time refers to the poet's *technē*. Taken out of context the passage merely reinforces what we already know from the earlier dialogues: whether divinely inspired or a thoughtless imitator, the poet understands nothing of what he says, and the mention of *technē* makes no difference to that picture (Janaway 1995, 180; Murray 1996, 237–238). But the words of the Athenian Stranger which follow could be taken to imply that the poet's mimetic activity might not be as mindless as the imagery suggests (Halliwell 2011, 166 n.25). Speaking on behalf of poets, the Athenian stranger observes that whereas the law-giver is compelled to issue only one statement about a single matter, a poet can choose what is appropriate. So, for example, the law-giver would say that a funeral must always be moderate. But if a poet were composing a poem about a rich woman giving instructions about a funeral, he would recommend an extravagant burial, whereas a poor man would favor a meager funeral, and a man of moderate means a modest one (*Laws* 719d–e). The point is not pursued, but the poet is at least credited with the ability to adapt his subject matter to suit the characters whom he portrays (compare Ion's claim at 540b3–5). Perhaps we are to imagine him throwing himself into the part in each particular case and letting the inspiration flow. But whether this *technē*

of *mimēsis* amounts to anything more than the low-level activity outlined in the *Republic* (the poet "understanding nothing other than how to imitate" simply uses words and phrases to give superficial coloring to his material, 601a4–6) I rather doubt. It is not because *mimēsis* is a *technē* in any meaningful sense that Plato elsewhere keeps it separate from inspiration, but because the process of *mimēsis* involves some kind of agency on the part of the poet. Inspiration, on the other hand, deprives him of all responsibility for what he produces.

Authorship and Authority

Inspiration in Plato is, at the very least, an equivocal concept, made all the more difficult to interpret because it is presented predominantly in terms of imagery, its quasi-mythical formulation raising more questions for us than it answers about what is involved in the production of a poem (Schaper 1968 , 50–51). The picture of the inspired poet in the *Ion* is bizarre, yet compelling, for it strikes at the heart of the problems of authorship and authority which the claim to inspiration raises. The stark opposition between *technē* and inspiration which the dialogue presents is both idiosyncratic and provocative, and certainly a departure from conceptions of poetry that we find in the early Greek poets. It is worth noting that Democritus, who is cited together with Plato as an important source for the idea of poetic inspiration as a form of madness or *furor poeticus* (Cicero, *De Oratore* 2.46.194, *De Divinatione* 1.38.80, Horace, *Ars Poetica* 295–297), seems nevertheless to have praised Homer for the craftsmanship of his work (fr. 21 and above n.3). Outside Plato even the practice of ecstatic divination can be referred to as a *technē* (Brillante 2009, 238–239). So, for example, Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1209 refers to Cassandra's prophetic gift as *technai entheoi*, "the art wherein the god is present," as Fraenkel (1950) translates it. Again in the history of the Delphic oracle presented at the beginning of the *Eumenides* (17–19) the priestess speaks of Zeus inspiring Apollo with the seer's art (lit. "Zeus made his mind *entheon* with *technē*"). But Plato will have none of this, insisting that divine inspiration and human technique are mutually exclusive alternatives when it comes to the genesis of poetry. The *Ion*'s focus on the utter irrationality of the poetic process not only makes divine inspiration and human *technē* incompatible, it also removes all agency from the poet so that the separation of the author from his work is complete. But in that case, what authority does the poet have? If we read the image literally, and accept that god speaks through the poet, we are faced with what Clark has called "the most intractable feature of the archaic notion – that writers have most authority when they least know what they are doing" (1997, 3). But the way in which Plato deploys the traditional imagery of inspiration to deprive poets of responsibility for their poems suggests that his purpose is rather to undermine their time-honored status as "masters of truth" than to confirm their claims of

privileged access to superhuman wisdom. On the other hand, the attribution of poetry to a divine source complicates the question of how we are to judge it, and the naive reader (most recently Büttner 2011) would not be totally wrong to insist that if the poet is the mouthpiece of the god, then his product must be good, regardless of whether the poet himself can give an account of his activity. Remove divinity from the poetic process and inspiration becomes merely irrational, as is the case with the mad poet satirized by Horace in the *Ars Poetica* (295–303, 453–476). But if inspiration comes from god, the issue of value is unavoidable. Our interpretation will depend ultimately on how much irony we read into Plato's depiction of the inspired poet and the divine *furor* to which he is subject (Tigerstedt 1969, 70–72).

The appeal to the Muse, so beloved of the poets, contains within it an ambiguity which Plato, who, of course, had his own reasons for wishing to turn poets into divine madmen who had no authority to speak on matters of morality and wisdom, was all too ready to exploit. For whilst it can act as a guarantee of the poet's credentials, it also deprives him of responsibility. At the same time, inspiration carries with it connotations of privilege and exclusivity which distinguish the poet from other types of craftsmen, and it is no surprise to find that in the higher genres of fifth-century poetry – tragedy, epinician, and other types of formal lyric – poets eschewed the vocabulary of "making," choosing instead to project an image of themselves as singers whose moral wisdom derived from the divine inspiration of the Muse (Ford 2002, 136–139). And though critics might prefer to analyze poetry in terms of its artful construction, the imagery of inspiration lived on, long after belief in the divinity of the Muse had ceased. That in itself is a more complex problem than is often supposed (Fowler 2002, 144; Sharrock 2002, 208; Murray 2014), but my concern here is with aesthetics rather than religion, and my point is that inspiration does not have to be interpreted literally in order to be taken seriously (Rasula 2009). Callimachus, for example, makes frequent use of the figure of the Muse in ways that are more than merely decorative (Morrison 2011), and in the *Prologue to the Aetia* responds to Plato's challenge by combining the ideas of inspiration and *technē* to articulate a new poetics which affirms the central role of poetry in the reshaping of Greek culture. As Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2002, 2012) have shown, allusions to Plato abound in Callimachus' work, and the *Aetia Prologue* raises questions about the nature of poetry and its value in language imbued with Platonic associations. Judge poetry by *technē*, Callimachus says to his critics (fr. 1, 17–18), but at the same time he claims to have received his instructions from Apollo (22) and aligns himself with the cicada (29–30), an archetypal image of inspiration (Plato, *Phaedrus* 259b5–d8, Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012, 36–39). Callimachus' engagement with Plato and his reworking of traditional poetic themes makes his programmatic statement much more than the banal assertion of the primacy of technique over inspiration that it has long been held to be. Rather, it can be read as a complex act of artistic self-definition in

which Callimachus seeks to reclaim for poetry the cultural authority that it had once had by restoring the earlier relationship between inspiration, *technē*, and *sophia*, which Plato had blown apart (Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012, 42–46, 82).

Inspiration remains an important theme in Hellenistic poetry generally, and the Muse becomes, amongst other things, an intertextual figure, a means of forging poetic identity in relation to the past (Bing 2008). Illustrious predecessors themselves become Muse-like figures who initiate modern-day poets into the workings of their art, this new authorizing strategy combining the roles of inspiration and *technē* in the poetic process to produce an image of the poet as craftsman, but as one distinguished from other *technitai*, or professionals, by the "privileged sacrality" that inspiration confers (Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004, 3 and see 1–17). That privilege is even more evident in Roman poetry where the figure of the Muse or other inspiring deity can be used by the poet to assert his independence in relation to the dictates of power, as, for example, in the *recusatio* poems of the Augustan age or in Statius' endless deferral of the promised celebration of Domitian's achievements (Rosati 2002). From the point of view of social history it is not difficult to see the usefulness of such a topos, for whether a religious figure or a rhetorical trope, the Muse represents all that is outside the poet's control in the composition of a poem, yet paradoxically allows him autonomy to follow his inspiration wherever it leads. But in terms of aesthetics, the remarkable persistence of the idea of poetic inspiration attests to its importance for poets (if not for critics) in the definition of their activity, which suggests a significance that goes beyond the merely practical.

Inspiration, Criticism, and Theory

Inspiration remained deeply embedded in the practice of poetry, not least through the image of the Muse, but the idea was rarely theorized in the predominantly formalist criticism of literature in antiquity. Aristotle mentions inspiration only once in the *Poetics* (chapter 17), when speaking of the importance of visualization in the composition of tragedy: if he is to construct a plausible plot, the dramatist needs to keep the scene before his eyes, seeing everything as vividly as possible, like an eyewitness of the events, in order to find what is appropriate and avoid inconsistencies. He should also use gestures when composing speeches as an aid to authenticity, for the poet who feels the emotions which he wants his characters to express will be the most convincing. "That is why poetry is the work of a man who is naturally gifted [*euphuēs*] rather than[8] a madman [*manikos*]; the former are adaptable whereas the latter are out of their minds [*ekstatikoi*]." That brief reference to poetic madness dismisses Plato's inspired poet in favor of one who can use his natural ability to project himself into his characters and convey their emotions as vividly as possible in accordance with the requirements of the plot. Ion may

have enthused his audience with the emotions that he himself experienced (535b–536a, discussed above), but for Aristotle such effects depend on the exercise of mental faculties, not on the mindless inspiration of the Muse.

The ability to move an audience is, of course, an essential part of the orator's art, and it is mainly in rhetorical treatises that discussions of inspiration are to be found. In this context inspiration is seen primarily in terms of the effects of discourse and the power of delivery to evoke an emotional response in an audience.[9] Cicero confirms a connection between this rhetorical idea of inspiration and that of poetic *enthousiasmos* when he discusses the topic in the *De Oratore* (2.189–96). Antonius, the speaker, insists that in order to move an audience, the orator must genuinely feel the emotions he wishes to arouse in them. If anyone should doubt that this is possible, he says, he should look to the example of the theater (193). What can be so feigned or fictitious (*tam fictum*) as poetry, the stage, and the theater? Yet he has often seen the actor's eyes blaze from behind his mask as he gives voice to the grief and anger of the character that he plays. If an actor can feel such emotions when performing daily on the stage, how could the dramatist who wrote the lines have failed to be moved himself? Such passion must also be felt by the poet whose words the actor speaks, and indeed he has often heard that no one can become a good poet without emotional fire (*sine inflammatione animorum*, lit. "an inflammation of the spirit"), and without "a kind of inspired frenzy" (*sine quodam adflatu quasi furoris*), a view to be found in the writings of Democritus and Plato. Cicero's reference to poetic *furor* in this context cannot but recall the *Ion* and that chain of communication involving poet, rhapsode, and audience in the emotional transport of performance. But whereas Plato focuses on the rhapsode's mental state in order to demonstrate the irrationality of the poetic process, Cicero is concerned with the authenticity of the emotions as the key to effective performance. The Muse plays no part in this secularized notion of inspiration and there is little that is inexplicable about the speaker's power.

The association between inspiration and the emotions is further explored in the work of Longinus (Walker, Porter, and Halliwell in this volume), for whom powerful and inspired emotion is one of the sources of "sublimity" (*hupsos*), that quality of great literature, both poetry and prose alike, which overwhelms its audience with irresistible force, transcending the limits of rational persuasion (*On the Sublime*, 1). Sublimity is both inspiring and inspired, its effects dependent on a number of causes, the most important of which is grandeur of thought, a characteristic of natural greatness and an inborn gift (chapters 8 and 9). But the capacity to form grand conceptions can also be cultivated by the imitation and emulation of the great poets and writers of the past. Just as the priestess at Delphi is empowered to deliver her oracles by breathing in the divine afflatus that emanates from ground beneath her tripod, so too aspiring writers can breathe in the spirit of the ancients and

derive inspiration from the grandeur of their predecessors (13.2). The Platonic imagery (cf. *Laws* 719c) transforms the technique of imitating ancient models into a mysterious process, with the genius of the ancients replacing the Muse as the source of the recipient's enthusiasm. But despite the Platonic language which permeates Longinus' work, inspiration for him is not incompatible with art (*technē*). Sublimity may be "the echo of a noble mind" (ch. 9), the product of innate qualities in the character of the author, but art is necessary if natural ability is to be used to the best effect, and the treatise as a whole is predicated on the assumption that there is an art of the sublime (ch. 2).

In fact, rhetorical notions of inspiration which apply to poetry and prose alike have little to do with the issues of authority and authorship implied by the invocation to the Muse, a convention which is unique to poetry, and about which ancient literary criticism is largely silent. But the theoretical implications of the imagery of inspiration are far from trivial, as Plato saw. *Don't Ask Me What I Mean* is the title of an anthology published in 2003 (Brown and Paterson) in which poets talk about their poems in terms which attest to the longevity of reflections on inspiration and craft, and which also suggest that Socrates' problem with poets who are unable to explain the meaning of their work is alive and well. The *Ion* can be read as an early, indeed the earliest, contribution to a long and ongoing debate about the nature of authorship (Burke 1995), but it is more than that. The questions that it raises about inspiration and craft relate ultimately to questions concerning the status of poetry and how it is conceptualized as an activity. The making of a poem seems to be different from the making of anything else. But what sort of product is a poem, or for that matter any other verbal construct that is not geared toward a practical end? Poems, plays, and novels are constructs which originate in an author's imagination, as we would say. But what does the author actually know about his or her subject matter? Why is it that works of art, the depiction of imagined worlds, can affect us in the way that they do? Plato's myth of divine inspiration doesn't provide an answer to these questions, but it does pose the problem.

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FURTHER READING

Poetic inspiration is a neglected topic in the history of aesthetics, but Clark (2000) provides a cogent and sophisticated analysis of its importance. The essays in Roe and Stanco (2007) demonstrate the persistence of the idea and its relation to questions of technique from antiquity to the present day. Murray (1981) provides a starting point on poetic inspiration in early Greece, whilst Finkelberg (1998) considers its implications for the conceptualization of poetry at this period. There is also much of relevance in Halliwell (2011). On Plato Tigerstedt (1969) remains fundamental. Stern-Gillet (2004) is excellent on Plato's denial of *technē* to the poets, but too dismissive of his concept of inspiration.

NOTES

1 For early occurrences of the word see Pindar's *Olympian* 1.15, fr. 32, cf. fr. 52k39; and Ford (2002, 94) and Murray and Wilson (2004, 1).

2 On the terminology and its implications see Maurizio (1995, 76–79). For analysis of the speech see Murray (1996 ad loc).

3 Tigerstedt (1969, 73, n.6), but see Brillante (2009, 222–226) for a defense of the phrase. On inspiration in Democritus see Tigerstedt (1969, 72–76), Ford (2002, 165–172), Brillante (2009, 213–232).

4 On the phrase *kata kosmon* see Halliwell (2011, 84–87). He also discusses at length more general questions concerning the peculiar power of poetry to draw its audiences into "intensely imagined worlds of experience" (300). See especially pages 281–284, 300–304.

5 The arguments of Stern-Gillet (2004, 184–185) and Rijksbaron (2007, 152–153) have persuaded me that this translation is preferable to that of Murray (1996 *ad loc*: "the whole thing is poetry, isn't it?").

6 Janaway (1995, 16–29), with Stern-Gillet's critique (2004, 182–190).

7 On who such poets might be see Heath (2013, 46–52).

8 1455a33. On the text see Lucas (1968 ad loc). I follow those scholars who insert *mallon* here on the authority of the Arabic text. See further Tarán and Gutas (2012, 274–275).

9 Cicero, *Orator* 132; Quintilian 6.2.26–36. See also Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, 99–103 with Brink (1971, 182–189).

CHAPTER 11
The Canons of Style

Jeffrey Walker

The charm of this sort of pleasure steals over one unawares.

"Demetrius," *On Style* 181

Only the lull I like, the hum of your valvèd voice.

Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* 5.86

Introduction: Rhetoric, Poetics, Aesthetics

As D.A. Russell has observed, "Ancient theories of style grew up almost entirely in the context of a certain kind of rhetorical instruction" (Russell 1981/1995, 129) – namely, a regimen of critical analysis, exercise, and imitation. As Russell notes, rhetorical teaching "took all literature as [its] province," and "helped to shape the work of many of the great poets and historians of antiquity," not to mention philosophers and orators (117, 119). Virtually everyone who sang, spoke, or wrote in the public sphere had been trained in rhetoric. Yet Russell, while recognizing its deep influence in stylistic theory and its formative role in ancient literary culture, nevertheless declares that rhetoric was an obstacle to "aesthetic judgment" because of its focus on persuasion and practical use-value (117). Great literature was mined for its examples of good and bad rhetorical technique, and admired for its persuasiveness, rather than for its intrinsic value as an object of aesthetic appreciation.

Or so that line of thought goes. It is hardly new. It is founded on an assumed opposition between rhetoric and poetics, practical and aesthetic, persuasion and expression, and so on, that has been commonplace for at least a century (see, for example, Baldwin 1924 and Bonner 1939/1969, where the opposition already is an unquestioned given). In truth it amounts to little more than prejudice, insofar as it goes unquestioned, and it distorts our perception of ancient stylistic theory. However, it has been taken for granted for so long, and is presupposed by so much of the available vocabulary – words like poetry, rhetoric, persuasion, aesthetics, art – that we can hardly think otherwise. So it is hard to know what to say, or where to start, on the topic of this chapter.

Let us re-emphasize the widely recognized if poorly understood fact that, in antiquity, the sharp modern dichotomy between "rhetorical" and "poetic"

discourse – or "persuasive" and "aesthetic" – essentially did not exist. Differences between "poetry" and "prose" of course were recognized (e.g. poetry is composed in verse), and genres and subgenres of various kinds were differentiated. But all forms of discourse were understood to have both rhetorical and poetic, persuasive and aesthetic dimensions, though ancient thought probably would not put it that way, having no need to join what is not divided in the first place. The great style critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, compares the speeches of Demosthenes to "the most powerful [*kratistos*] poems and lyrics" (see *On Composition* 25–26). This way of thinking does not entail stripping Demosthenes' orations of their considerable persuasive power and perceiving them *instead* as "aesthetic objects" of some kind. Rather, it entails thinking of "poems and lyrics," like all other forms of public discourse, as exerting some sort of persuasive force – either what Kenneth Burke has called "persuasion to action" or "persuasion to attitude" (Burke 1950/1969 50). Dionysius' choice of the term *kratistos* (strongest, most powerful, best) is telling: "good" poetry is forceful, moving, and persuasive. The aesthetics of style *includes* persuasive force; persuasion *includes* and sometimes *is* aesthetic appeal.

One might argue that the modern notion of "aesthetics" (as disinterested appreciation of the beautiful) is foreign to ancient thought, or subsumed under different concepts, as David Konstan suggests in his contribution to this volume (Chapter 24, "Beauty"). Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his critical essays does use the term *aisthēsis*, "sense-perception," but by it he means the direct, non-logical impact of style, rhythm in particular, on the human nervous system and its emotional and attitudinal effects: one style puts the listener in a pensive mood; another stirs his anger. As Konstan observes, "beauty" and other qualities perceived by *aisthēsis* are characteristically linked to *eros* and other affective states, or their sublimated derivatives. These include the quasi-musical power of a well-formed style to enthrall, to exert a compelling force that works differently from reasoned argument and can assist or overwhelm it. That is what "Demetrius" has in mind, in the epigraph to this essay, when he speaks of the subtle, seductive "charm" of stylistically induced "pleasure," which "steals unaware" over a listener's mind. (That too is what Whitman, entranced by the sheer sound of a lover's "valvèd voice," seems to mean.) From the Archaic (pre-Classical) period onward, persuasion is persistently identified with *seduction* – see, for example, Sappho's hymn to Aphrodite (fr. 1). To be persuasive is, in this perspective, to be erotically and compellingly attractive: the aesthetics of style resolves into the rhetoric of style, which in turn is an erotics of style. In short, if we are to consider the aesthetics of style in ancient rhetorical culture, we need to rethink what "aesthetics" means, or at least try to set our modern presumptions aside.

The Archaic Background

So let us start here:

"Speech," says Gorgias of Leontini in his *Encomium of Helen*, "is a mighty lord" (*logos dynastēs megas estin*, 8). The first thing he mentions to illustrate this point is *rhythmic speech* in poetry and ecstatic song: it operates, as he says, like drugs or witchcraft to "mix with the soul's opinion [and] charm and persuade and alter" the listener's disposition (9–10, 14). It can "stop fear, remove grief, create joy, and increase pity"; it can bring forth "shuddering fear, tearful compassion, and yearning desire" (8–9); it can distress, delight, or make the listener bold (14). Gorgias does recognize the role of reasoning (*logismos*, calculation) in persuasive speech (2, 13): what the speaker says, after all, must at least seem logical in order to convince. But to Gorgias it is clear that the sheer aesthetic appeal of style – especially the rhythm and "music" of the spoken word – has an extra-rational psychological effect that logic cannot match. This sort of persuasion is what later sources call psychagōgia, "soul-guiding, beguilement, enchantment" (e.g. Plato *Phaedrus* 261a). Through style the skillful speaker casts a spell, a drug-like aesthetic force, which influences the listener's mood and his reception of what the speaker says.

Gorgias' account of logos often is viewed as a sort of proto-poststructuralist foray into language philosophy, or a Nietzschean disruption of rigid rationality. None of it, however, is especially original with him. What he offers is, in fact, not a shocking new view but a set of deeply traditional commonplaces in fifth-century BC Greek culture – commonplaces that he invokes to warrant his claim that Helen of Troy was blameless even if "persuaded by words" to commit adultery (Helen 8–9). He might, perhaps, be offering these ideas not to celebrate logos's power, but to remind the listener of its dangers, its potential to "drug and bewitch the soul with an evil sort of persuasion" (14; see Valiavitcharska 2006). That is, in fact, the central theme of his other surviving speech, the *Defense of Palamedes*: logos has a tenuous relation to reality, so do not be quick to judgment when the stakes are high and logos is all you have. Again, the ideas about logos function as warrants, not as claims. All these notions are part of an Archaic cultural system that goes back at least to Hesiod and Homer (in the Hellenic world), and that is echoed in oral-traditional societies around the world even today (I discuss this topic more fully in Walker 2000, ch. 1). My point is that, if we are to speak of "rhetoric and the canons of style" in ancient culture, we must take into account the Archaic background and its long persistence.

The root meaning of *kanōn* is a "standard" or "measure," literally a measuring stick, against which something can be assessed. Further, a *kanōn* can be either a preceptual standard (a "rule") or a model held to exemplify that standard (Rutherford 1998, 3). For example, stylistic theory in later antiquity provides an account of the elements of "forcefulness" (*deinotēs*), and typically invokes Demosthenes as the canonic model of "forceful" style. The forcefulness of a

writer's or student's style can be assessed with reference to those elements, and through comparison with the model; and one can develop one's forcefulness through seeking to imitate Demosthenes (in writing and speaking exercises). For Gorgias the canons of style derive from the Archaic tradition he invokes. In that tradition poetic discourse is the "permanent" (memorious, repeatable), esteemed, and paradigmatic form of wisdom-speaking eloquence: it furnishes the "applied" eloquence of practical civic speech with its authoritative models of style and argument, and a fund of commonplaces and mythic lore that can be invoked as premises or examples (e.g. the advice-for-living of Theognis' elegiacs, the "farmer's almanac" of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, the legends preserved in Homeric epic, etc.). The skilled speaker composes a rhythmic discourse that loosely resembles verse or song, and that resonates with its wisdoms, but is not the same. One hears this idea repeated from early to late antiquity. Thus the development of ancient stylistic theory can be understood as rearticulation, in different contexts, of the Archaic system invoked by Gorgias and by the poets long before him.

More particularly, ancient stylistic theories can be understood as responses to the yet more ancient concept of the psychagogic force of style in prose or verse that, so to speak, sings, and by singing charms, beguiles, bewitches, and sometimes overwhelms (Porter 2009). These responses can be sorted into two main traditions, or what the young Cicero, fresh from his school lessons and probably repeating them, identifies as two "streams": a philosophical stream whose "fountainhead" and metonymic title is "Aristotle" (i.e. the early Academy and Peripatos); and a sophistic stream whose fountainhead and title is "Isocrates." In this he seems to be reflecting an established view. (See Cicero, *On Invention* 2.7–8, *To His Friends* 1.9.23, and *On the Orator* 2.94, 3.56–59, 141; Quintilian 3.14–15; and Walker 2011 31–32. On the definition of "sophist" see Anderson 1993, Gagarin 2002, and Cribiore 2007; by "sophist" I mean in essence a professional teacher of rhetoric.) These two traditions should not be thought of as completely antithetical – as Cicero recognizes, they borrow from and interpenetrate each other (*On Invention* 2.8) – but they do reflect differing attitudes toward rhetoric and the seductions of style.

Unfortunate Necessities: Aristotle on Rhetoric

Aristotle's account of style appears in the *Rhetoric*, and spills over into the *Poetics*. Aristotle, of course, considers rhetoric a valid object of philosophical study. It is a pervasive phenomenon in all societies – all human beings, as "political animals," constantly engage in persuasive discourse and dispute each other's views (*Politics* 1.2; *Rhetoric* 1.1.1–2). Aristotle is aware, too, of the necessity of rhetoric as a practical civic art (*Rhetoric* 1.1.1, 12–14; 1.2.12,

14). But he is ambivalent about it (Poster 1997). Like Plato and others writing in the wake of the Peloponnesian War, the trial of Socrates, and the sway of demagogues and "sycophants" (freelance accusers/blackmailers) in fourth-century Athens, Aristotle is quite aware of the possibilities for "evil persuasion" and skeptical about the prospects for democracy (Yunis 1996; Svoboda 2007).

A key problem, for Aristotle, is what he sees as rhetoric's potential for corruption of the speaker. In a democratic polity like Athens, the speaker typically must address an audience composed largely of shopkeepers, craftsmen, laborers, and the like, as well as the upper classes. Common working-class people, in Aristotle's view, are mostly ignorant, weak-minded, morally corrupt vulgarians who cannot follow a complex line of reasoning, and who respond chiefly to irrelevant emotional appeals, titillating style, and oratorical theatrics – just as, in the theater, "most people" are incapable of grasping the deeper philosophical significance of tragedy and simply thrill instead to the costumes, colors, stage effects, music, exciting sword fights, melodramatic speeches, and the like (*Poetics* 4, 6). The democratic speaker must adapt to such audiences. As Plato says, he must speak in a manner suited to their souls (*Phaedrus* 277b–c). In essence he must become like them, and speak as one of them, rehearsing their vulgar sensibility and affect. Since Aristotle considers moral character (*ēthos*) to be a matter of habit developed through repeated acts embodying moral preference (*Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1), it follows that the speaker who adapts to vulgar, democratic audiences eventually will acquire their moral and emotive habits, and thus will himself be vulgarized and morally corrupted. To be an orator in a democratic polity or popular forum, or likewise to perform in theaters for vulgar audiences, is (for Aristotle) degrading, distasteful, and beneath the dignity of a genuine statesman, though it may sometimes be necessary.

On one hand, then, Aristotle seems to approach rhetoric more as an object of theoretical knowledge or critical judgment than as something for the virtuous man to do. At the outset of the *Rhetoric*, for example, he says that the work of a *technē* (an "art") is to "observe" (*theōrein*) the reasons why some speakers succeed and others fail (1.1.1), that is, to give a systematic theoretical account of the principles governing the phenomenon of argument and persuasion in public discourse. Further, Aristotle's famous definition of rhetoric – "let rhetoric be a faculty of observing [*theōrein*] the possibly persuasive in each case" (*Rhetoric* 1.2.1) – suggests a faculty of judging arguments already made. The phrase "the possibly persuasive" (*to endechomenon pithanon*) more specifically signifies what is admissible, allowable, acceptable as persuasive. Significantly, Aristotle says that rhetoric is a faculty of *observing* arguments, not of inventing or discovering (*heuriskein*) them, or even of speaking persuasively, as his sophistic colleagues would say. Indeed he says explicitly that the function of rhetoric, as a theoretical art, is "not to persuade,

but to see [*idein*] … the persuasive and the apparently persuasive" in each case, just as dialectic sees "the syllogism and the apparent syllogism" (*Rhetoric* 1.1.14). Clearly this "seeing" (which could also be translated as "knowing") means recognizing and discriminating between what should and should not be thought persuasive. This is rhetoric as an art of critical appraisal: an art to be exercised by the "observing" philosopher-spectator, or by the philosophically trained magistrate whose aim is to see through the orator's vulgarities and sophistries, discard what is irrelevant, and judge the case on its merits.

On the other hand, Aristotle does seem at times to intend instruction for the would-be orator, or, at least, the philosophical defender of truth and justice in the public sphere. As he says (twice in the same passage), the true and the good are naturally more persuasive than their opposites, so it is shameful if their advocates cannot prevent courts and assemblies from judging wrongly, just as being unable to defend oneself physically is shameful (1.1.12). One suspects that Aristotle is thinking of the trial of Socrates. There is also Diogenes Laertius' report, though he is somewhat unreliable and is writing more than five centuries later, that Aristotle "exercised with his students on 'theses' [general themes] and trained them rhetorically" (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* 5.3). This, if true, suggests speaking exercises on general philosophical questions – "what is the best form of government?" – as in the progymnasmata ("preliminary exercises" in rhetoric) of later antiquity (see Kennedy 2003). But it is not clear what "training them rhetorically" actually means: perhaps training them to give public lectures, or simply to assess the persuasiveness of their fellow students' proofs. Probably it means leading them in critical and disputative (dialectical) discussions.

But whatever form of rhetorical training he intends, Aristotle is caught between giving precepts for an ideal form of rhetoric – rhetoric as it should be – and precepts for practicing rhetoric as it is. We see this in his approach to style.

Aristotle on Style

Although he certainly was not the first to write about stylistic theory, Aristotle's treatment in *Rhetoric* Book 3 (in which he includes and conflates both style and delivery) is generally regarded as the earliest surviving attempt at a systematic account (Kennedy 2007 , 193; 1989 190–194). From the outset his discomfort is apparent. He asserts, for example, that the study of argument "naturally" precedes style/delivery – just as, in Book 1, he has said it is rhetoric's only proper subject (1.1.3–4, 11) – and he declares that the study of style/delivery "seems vulgar when rightly considered" (3.1.2–5). Indeed it would be preferable, he says, "to contend by means of the facts themselves, so that anything besides logical proof is superfluous" (3.1.5). This resonates also

with his earlier-stated preferences for "well-regulated" courts and assemblies where participation is restricted, emotional appeals and irrelevant digressions are not allowed, deliberation is focused strictly on questions of fact and law, and the art of rhetoric has almost nothing to do (*Rhetoric* 1.1.3–10). But he also recognizes that stylistic study is necessary, however ignoble, since style/delivery has "the greatest power" (*hē dunamis megistē*) in both poetic and political contests "due to the corruption of the audience" (a point that he actually makes twice; 3.1.2–4). This is a large admission.

Perhaps most significant is Aristotle's remark on the "fitting" performance and effect of emotive style:

> Fitting style … makes the fact persuasive; for the soul misreckons that the speaker speaks truthfully – that in such circumstances people are in such a state – so that the audience supposes, even if things are not as the speaker says, that they are. And the hearer always shares in the feeling of the speaker who speaks emotionally, even if he says nothing. Hence many speakers overwhelm their listeners by making noise. (3.7.4–5)

Here we are in the realm of Gorgias' rhythmic psychagogy, or of Hesiod's Muses, who declare that they can make anything whatever seem believable through their song (*Theogony* 27–28). In essence Aristotle agrees that a stylistically "fitting" (*oikeios*, familiar) performance of emotion infects (or drugs) the listener's soul with a kindred mood. (On the neurological basis of this kind of "echo" response, see Davis 2008, 131 on "mirror neurons," and Sacks 2007.) This mood in turn makes what the speaker says seem true, even if it amounts to "nothing" or makes no sense. For example, if the speaker sounds believably indignant, and the audience has been infected with the mood (or an echo of it), then what the speaker alleges appears to be a valid reason for indignation, and, because he seems truly indignant about it, it appears also to be true. (That is, he wouldn't be indignant about it if it hadn't happened, but he is indignant, so it must have happened; and since he is indignant, what happened must be a reason for indignation; and I feel it too.) There are, of course, limits to this kind of susceptibility; and a resolutely skeptical or resistant listener may not be susceptible at all. But, as Gorgias might say, in most cases and with most people the rhythm and melody of emotive speech, if credibly performed, can "mix with the soul's opinion" and the listener's affect.

In the *Politics*, Aristotle prescribes a musical training for the children of the ruling class in his ideal polity. While he grants that listening to music for the purposes of relaxation is acceptable for adults, he has reservations about what kinds of music are suitable for performance and for the development of youthful character. Basically, he holds that young men destined to govern should not be trained for professional musical performance (for that is vulgar); the young should play only the simplest instruments necessary for

learning the basic principles of music. Further, they should not be taught to play, but only to listen to and critically appreciate, the "active" and "ecstatic" kinds of music (*ta praktika*, *ta enthousiastika*), as these have the "distorted" melodies and rhythms that resonate with the "distorted souls" of common folk and make them dance about at festivals. Instead, the young of the ruling elite should learn to play (or sing) only the "ethical" kinds of music (*ta ethika*), such as the Dorian mode, which is "steady and has a manly character" (8 1339a–1342b). These ideas seem to agree with, and may derive from, the fifth-century musicologist Damon (Anderson 1955 and 1966; Barker 1985; West 1992; Anderson and Mathiesen 2007; and Fortenbaugh *et al.* 1992, 580–581). But my point is that, with Aristotle, the virtuous *politikos*, or the philosophical participant in public affairs, is not to perform in theaters before mixed audiences (of the common and noble), and is not to engage in the emotionality of "active" and "ecstatic" music, but is to perform instead the "ethical" modes that induce a calm, steady, manly state of mind amenable to rational thought and judgment.

In the *Rhetoric* we find a kindred approach to style. Good style, with Aristotle, is first of all to be clear and grammatically correct: these are the primary requirements, since (he says) the function of speech is to communicate ideas (3.2.1). Clarity is achieved by using the "proper" (*kyrios*) words for things (3.2), and correctness is achieved by following the conventions of syntactical construction in "pure" Greek (3.5; see also *Poetics* 20–22). But, as Aristotle says, the "perfection of style" is to be distinctive, dignified, and appropriate: it should be neither lowly (*tapeinos*) nor excessive (*hyper to axiōma*, above its worth), but should strike a balance in between (*Poetics* 22, *Rhetoric* 3.2.1). "Dignity" here translates *semnos* (solemn) and *ongkos* (weighty, substantial; 3.2, 6). This solemn and weighty dignity, then, is to be achieved through the appropriate use of "poetic" devices of diction and rhythm that distinguish one's style from common speech, and make it clearer and give it gravitas. The devices of diction include metaphor in particular, to which Aristotle gives a great deal of attention, as well as vivid description, witty "urbanities" (*ta asteia*), and anything else that makes ideas more memorable, most of which turn out to be forms of metaphor (*Rhetoric* 3.2–4, *Poetics* 22).

Concerning rhythm, Aristotle says (3.8) that prose should be neither "in meter" (*emmetros*) nor "without rhythm" (*arrhythmos*): that is, just as Archaic tradition holds, it should rhythmically resemble poetry, and especially the stateliness of heroic verse, without actually being verse. For this purpose he recommends "paeanic" rhythm (three short syllables and a long). But again, this rhythm, like any other, should be incorporated loosely; otherwise the style will seem artificial and inappropriate to speech, and will distract the audience. Similarly, prose without rhythm is "unpleasant and unintelligible" because it has no boundaries: its ideas are not chunked into clearly marked phrases and clauses that can easily be taken in. This line of thought leads Aristotle to

prefer the "periodic" (hypotactic) to the "running" (paratactic) style, because it groups ideas in clearly organized bundles and brings each sentence to a definite closure (3.9). So rhythm, too, serves the purposes of clarity as well as dignity.

In sum, Aristotle wants a clear and "ethical" style that projects gravitas and induces a serious-minded, "steady and manly" mood – a style appropriate and conducive (as he sees it) to calm and rational deliberation that focuses on fact, evidence, and logic. What models does he look to? It has been remarked that Aristotle's choice of the paean is eccentric, and unreflected in actual practice (Kennedy 2007, 213–214). It has been pointed out, too, that he seems to have little awareness of the leading orators of his own day, particularly Demosthenes, whom he never mentions (Trevett 1996). Nonetheless Aristotle has some preferences, at least with respect to style. While most of his examples come from poets, particularly Homer and the tragedians, his chief example of good prose style is Isocrates, whom he cites 18 times (mostly to illustrate the periodic style, antithetical constructions, vivid description, and "urbanities"). This is rather surprising, if we accept the traditional view that Isocrates and Aristotle were rivals. But, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus observes (several centuries later), "Whenever I read [i.e. read out loud] the speeches of Isocrates … I become serious in character [*en ēthei*] and have a great stability of thought, like those listening to libation-music or to Dorian or enharmonic melodies" (*Demosthenes* 22). This is precisely the "ethical" sort of effect that Aristotle has in mind for his ideal of style.

To this example should be added Demetrius of Phaleron, a student of Theophrastus and the only noted orator to come from the Peripatetic school. After the death of Alexander, Demetrius was appointed governor of Athens by the Macedonian king Cassander (318–307 BC), and later went to Alexandria as an advisor to king Ptolemy I (where he may have had a hand in the creation of the Library of Alexandria; Walbank 1981, 176). Diogenes Laertius says that he "led the Athenians" for 10 years by means of *dēmēgorika*, "public speeches," but afterward was driven out of town (*Lives* 5.5.75–77). Demetrius' writings are lost, but Cicero describes them in terms reminiscent of his usual descriptions of Isocrates: a smooth, middle-style eloquence more suited to the "parade ground" than to "battle" (*Brutus* 9.37–38, *Orator* 37–42). This is a style more suited to public lecturing in schools, theaters or festival settings, or private reading, than to the agonistic clashes and heightened passions of law courts and deliberative assemblies. The titles in Diogenes' list of Demetrius' writings (5.5.80–81) confirm Cicero's impression. Nearly all appear to be "panegyric" addresses or treatises on political and philosophical themes, in the manner (perhaps) of Isocrates' discourses. Demetrius, then, seems to have "led the Athenians" by means of an "ethical" Isocratean rhetoric – a euphonious, moderate style meant not to overwhelm the audience's thought with intense emotion, but to induce a

“serious” and ”stable” mood inclined to reflective judgment. Notably, Plutarch records that Demetrius considered Demosthenes’ style “vulgar” (*Demosthenes* 9, 11), as effective as it was. This pretty clearly reflects the canons of style in the “Aristotelian” rhetorical tradition.

After Aristotle: Hellenistic Advances

There were important developments in rhetorical-stylistic theory in the Hellenistic period (roughly from the late fourth to the late first century BC), but much remains obscure because few texts have been preserved. The authorities generally credited for the chief innovations – Aristotle’s student Theophrastus (for stylistic theory) and the sophist Hermagoras of Temnos (for argumentation theory) – are almost completely lost. Theophrastus was active in the late fourth and early third centuries; Hermagoras in the second. Our main witnesses for Hermagorean and Theophrastean theory are the *Rhetoric to Herennius* falsely attributed to Cicero, and the young Cicero’s *On Invention*, both composed in the early first century BC and probably reflecting the Roman reception of standard Greek doctrine at the time. There are also Cicero’s later writings on rhetoric, the multi-volume treatise on rhetoric by the Epicurean philosopher-poet Philodemus of Gadara (a contemporary of Cicero) which was found at Herculaneum and still is being edited and translated, the treatise of “Demetrius” *On Style* (which may be datable to the second century BC), and the rather substantial extant writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the great stylistic theorist of the late first century BC. To these texts can be added scattered references to Hellenistic sources in Quintilian and other writers.

Theophrastus is mainly credited with two developments in stylistic theory. The first is the recasting of Aristotle’s somewhat haphazard dictates for good style as a more systematic rubric of “the four virtues” – clarity, correctness, embellishment, and appropriateness. Clarity and correctness, the essential requirements, include the grammatical lore of proper diction (signification, reference) and proper syntax (the formation of propositions); embellishment includes the lore of figuration and euphonious/rhythmic composition; and appropriateness, which governs all, is founded in the lore of *kairos* (context, situation, timeliness).

The second development attributed to Theophrastus is a revision of Aristotle’s idea that style should be neither “lowly” nor “inflated” but in between. This becomes the doctrine of “three styles”– the plain, the middle, and the grand – which appears in Cicero and the *Rhetoric to Herennius* and persists thereafter as standard theory in the Latin tradition, and hence in Western European thought through the Middle Ages down to modern times. It is possible that Theophrastus considered these types in more or less Aristotelian terms, as representing degrees (or quantity) of figuration, with the middle style the

golden mean between lack and excess (Russell 1981 , 135–137; Kennedy 1989, 194–195). That would be consistent with a preference for the Isocratean mood and the reported character of Demetrius of Phaleron's style. The *Rhetoric to Herennius*, moreover, seems to think of the three styles mostly in quantitative terms (light figuration, moderate, heavy; 4.8–10). Cicero, however, assigns functions to each type and considers them as options that the orator should use as needed: the plain style for narration of fact and logical exposition; the middle style for projecting ethos and rousing "ethical" moods or attitudes; and the grand style for rousing *pathos* (strong emotion) and motivating action. He also considers Demosthenes, and not Isocrates or Demetrius, to be the true model of oratorical style: Demosthenes' virtue is that he uses, and blends, all the styles perfectly. This idea seems to reflect not Peripatetic rhetoric but the Greek sophistic tradition.

A third contribution of the Hellenistic period is an advance in grammatical analysis (de Jonge 2008). Alexandrian scholarship brought linguistic theory – on Greek phonology, the "parts of speech," and the rules of syntax – to a level of sophistication far beyond Aristotle. The Stoics, likewise, are credited with expanding the list of figures of speech, especially tropes, such as we see in the *Rhetoric to Herennius* (Russell 1981/1995, 144–146; Kennedy 1994, 90–95). Aristotle recognizes just a handful of figures, but the *Herennius*, two centuries later, lists 35 types of schemes, 20 types of tropes, and 19 types of figures of thought, with additional subtypes in each category, amounting to more than a hundred in all. This proliferation of figures and their division into conceptual categories (figure of thought, figure of speech, trope, scheme) reflects, at least partly, philosophical interests in theoretical exhaustiveness, the principles of signification, and the rules governing the propositional meaning of a sentence – and, beyond that, the interpretation of texts and the logical analysis and critique of the arguments they make. The result of these advances was the emergence of the "art of grammar," *technē grammatikē*, as a formal discipline alongside rhetoric and philosophy. A *technē grammatikē* in essence was an art of (or handbook for) explicating the diction and linguistic forms, and at more advanced levels the literary form and meaning, of Homer and other writers. Especially important was the allegorical/ subtextual meaning of poetic and other texts. The earliest surviving (if sketchy and incomplete) *technē grammatikē* is that of Dionysius Thrax, produced around the turn of the first century BC. Five centuries later we see an ultimate development of this art in the first three books of Augustine's *On Christian Teaching*, which are devoted to the methods of scriptural hermeneutics (Kennedy 1989, 209–210).

In sum, the developments in rhetorical and stylistic theory in the philosophical tradition after Aristotle reflect a continuing attachment to the ideal of a restrained middle-style clarity, and a weighty dignity suited to philosophic speech and thoughtful deliberation in a "well-regulated" public sphere. Those developments also reflect an ongoing interest in rhetoric as an object of

theoretical knowledge, and in texts as objects of interpretation and critical analysis. A discourse (or a written text) of any kind is an embodied argument which ultimately must be reduced to its propositional content – claim, evidence, reasons – so that its logic can be judged. The role of style is to facilitate that process.

In the sophistic tradition things are different.

Types of Style

When Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites Isocrates' impact on his state of mind, he also cites Demosthenes. For when he reads that orator, he says, "I am in ecstasy," experiencing "all the passions that by nature govern human thought" – including disbelief and dread, contempt, goodwill and envy, anger, anguish, pity and the like – so that "I seem to myself no different from the worshippers of mother-goddess Cybele and Corybantic dancers" celebrating orgiastic rites. This experience makes him wonder what Demosthenes' audiences must have felt, when hearing him in actuality (*Demosthenes* 22).

This is, of course, the sort of thing that Gorgias talks about, and that Aristotle recognizes but fears and loathes. But Dionysius embraces it. With him Demosthenes is far superior to the smooth, steady elegance of Isocrates (21). The speaker must have range, and every form of style, to prevail with forceful, suasive speech in any form of public discourse. Here Dionysius reflects the pragmatism of sophistic schools of rhetoric from Hellenistic times to late antiquity. This pragmatism shows itself, in part, in the development of notions of "the types of style." We see it already in Cicero, with whom the Peripatetic notion of one good type of style between lack and excess becomes a set of three modalities with different kinds of force. But while this three-style theory becomes a fixture in Roman rhetoric, in the Greek sophistic world the analysis evolves. Beginning with "Demetrius" and Dionysius, we find lists of qualitative "types" of style (*ideai*, forms), or what are sometimes called "characters" of style. A style's *charaktēr* is its "stamp" or "impression," its qualitative feel. The details vary from one critic to the next, but, basically, each style-type is described in terms of its characteristic "thought" and mood (or "method"), and the diction, figures of thought and speech, and sentence compositions and rhythms that effectively express the mood. In Hermogenes, for example, the style of "sincere" or "truthful" speech (*alēthinos logos*) is said to express criticism or complaint (the thought) in an agitated, seemingly unplanned outburst (the mood). It characteristically employs "rough" diction; figures of thought like direct address, question, *diaporesis* (doubt), *aposiopesis* (breaking off), self-correction, and unfinished division; short, choppy clauses; inconsistent, broken rhythms; and phonetically clashing words (Hermogenes, *On Types* 2.7 and 1.7, in Wooten 1987).

We see this sort of analysis first in "Demetrius" *On Style*, which may be

datable to the mid- to later second century BC (Innes 1995, 312–321), and in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' critical essays in the first. "Demetrius" adds to the Theophrastian three styles – which he calls *ischnos, megaloprepēs, glaphyros*, (spare, magnificent, and elegant) – a fourth called *deinos*, "forceful." Dionysius goes further. In his *Thucydides*, for example, he presents a list of nine stylistic qualities for historiography, a rubric that he says is not original with himself. It seems derived from Theophrastus' virtues: three "necessary" qualities of clarity, correctness, and conciseness, and six "supplemental" qualities of elegance, solemnity, grandeur, tension, weight, and *hypsos* or "sublimity" (22). Dionysius shows how Thucydides is at his best when he employs the supplemental qualities in combination with the necessary (and at his turgid, obscure worst when he does not).

Dionysius' sort of list appears again in more developed form, two centuries later, in Pseudo-Aristides' and Hermogenes of Tarsus' treatises on style. "Aristides" lists two sets of types, which he calls "virtues" (see Patillon 2002). One set is for formal, contestatory "civic speech," and the other set is for "simple," informal talk – *logos politikos* and *logos aphelēs*. (*Aphelēs*, "smooth, uncomplicated," suggests a deliberate artlessness to be employed, for example, in an informal public lecture on some interesting theme, as opposed to the verbal combat of law courts and political assemblies.) The styles for *logos politikos* include solemnity, gravity, expansiveness, trustworthiness, vehemence, emphasis, and forcefulness (*deinotēs*), as well as sweetness, diligence, clarity, correctness, brevity, conciseness, and restraint. The styles for "simple" speech include "character," solemnity, expansiveness, sincerity, sweetness, and beauty. Both lists seem illustrative rather than exhaustive, but each type is analyzed at length. Notably, the Peripatetic opposition of plain and figured speech is gone: there is no "plain," but only qualities composed of different mixes of figuration, diction, and the rest. Clarity's a style, and sincerity too, and "simple" speech is a modality composed of several types. Hermogenes of Tarsus' *On Types of Style* (or *Peri Ideōn*) brings the kind of treatment of "Aristides" to something like an ultimate (if slightly manic) level of sophistication. He recognizes seven major types of style, or what he calls *ideai*, "forms" – clarity, grandeur, beauty, vigor, character, sincerity, and forcefulness, *deinotēs*, which is the perfect, timely and compelling use of all the other types in subtle, varied combination (*On Types* 2.9.368–369, 378). To these he adds another 13 minor types, for 20 in all: "character" contains simplicity, sweetness, subtlety, and modesty; "sincerity" indignation; "grandeur" brilliance, vehemence, asperity, solemnity, abundance, and florescence; and "clarity" has purity and distinctness. Each type is systematically analyzed in detail, according to its characteristic "thought," its "method" (or mood or figure of thought), and the details of its diction, figures, clause constructions, composition, cadences, and rhythm. This system of analysis, says Hermogenes, should help the student grasp and imitate the qualities of any writer's style, whether in the "practical"

kinds of *logos politikos* – deliberative, judicial, and civic ceremonial – or the "purely panegyric" kinds, including all types of poetry, history, and philosophic literature such as the dialogue and the informal talk (*On Types* 2.12.412; see 2.10–12 more generally).

Alongside these texts there is "Longinus" *On the Sublime* (see Porter in this volume), a treatise on a single type of style, *hypsos*, meaning literally the "highest" form of eloquence, the sudden lightning-stroke of greatness that completely overwhelms. The date and author are uncertain: possibly as early as the first, or as late as the third, century AD (Heath 1999). If early, it is close to Dionysius' world – in fact it responds to a treatise on "sublimity" by Dionysius' associate Caecilius of Caleacte – and if later, it's a second-sophistic product, after Aelius Aristides and Hermogenes. "Longinus," like those two, in his analysis adopts the basic protocol of subject matter (transcendent thoughts), mood (or high emotion), and the suitable figures, diction, and rhythmic composition. But whatever his date may be, it's clear that he is interested in theorizing an overwhelmingly compelling kind of style, or what Hermogenes and Pseudo-Aristides call *deinotēs*, and Dionysius, Caecilius and himself call *hypsos*, the "sublime," and find in the greatest poets, historians, philosophers and orators, Demosthenes in particular. Note that the basic root, *deinos*, means "terrible, awesome, marvelous," and suggests an awe-struck state resembling what "Longinus" says "sublimity" produces: audiences swept away, enthralled (1.3–4).

While *hypsos* and *deinotēs* may name two different styles, or variant descriptions of the same – a point that might be argued – the persisting study of such types reflects the old, Archaic awareness of the psychagogic force of style, and rhythmic composition in particular, for which the ancient, underlying paradigm is poetry. Both "Demetrius" and Dionysius, for example, stress that prose should be composed in rhythmic measures much like verse, although in prose the measures used should not obtrude, but should be varied and disguised, just as strictly metered lyric verse achieves the feel of natural speech through clause constructions that break up the lines ("Demetrius" 1, 180; Dionysius *On Composition* 25–26). (That sentence was composed loosely in iambic tetrameter, following Dionysius' advice.)

This sort of view is partly a result of poetry's priority in ancient education. But a deeper motive, and a truer, is the recognition that, as Cicero writes, "the ear contains within itself a natural capacity for measuring all sounds": all recognize and feel the force of cadences, rhythms, tones, the educated and the unschooled alike, though few can technically explain, and fewer still produce, what everyone by nature feels. Dionysius of Halicarnassus says the same, repeatedly (Cicero, *Orator* 177–178 and *On the Orator* 3.195–198; Dionysius, *On Composition* 11, *Thucydides* 4, *Demosthenes* 24). Dionysius' recurring term is *alogos aisthesis*, the natural, "non-logical perception" through which everyone experiences the rhythm and tone of speech. Accordingly he makes

this experience, this intuitive *aisthesis* of the force of different styles, the starting point of all rhetorical education – first perception, then analysis, of the forceful, the sublime, the noble, the sweet, the beautiful, the harsh, and so on, down to the flaccid and ugly. As he says, "beardless boys" are not experienced enough to cope with inventing arguments in serious political debate: those matters require the disciplined intelligence of gray-haired age. But "a love of style blooms naturally in youth, for every young man's soul is stirred by fine expression, and is attracted to it by an impulse that is nonrational [*alogos*], and much like inspiration" (*On Composition* 1). Thus rhetorical education should begin with composition, with arranging and rearranging words in different rhythmic and melodic combinations, moods and qualities, well before the study of invention or arrangement, or even diction figural and proper. Or so Dionysius believes.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the notion that, to understand ancient stylistic theory as an aesthetic, we must rethink what "aesthetics" means. It ends there too.

It makes no sense to fault ancient thought for failing to be modern, or to impose modern categories on ancient thought where they do not exist, or to assume that modern thought is more advanced because of its modernity. Ancient rhetoric developed an astonishingly sophisticated approach to stylistic analysis (and instruction) that, in truth, remains unmatched in modern thought. The style handbooks on sale today in your local bookstore, and the usual approaches to style in literature and creative-writing classrooms, come nowhere near the precision and comprehensiveness of Hermogenes.

It makes more sense to try to understand ancient stylistic theory on its own terms. It hardly was blind to aesthetics. In essence it reflected a rhetorical aesthetic, an aesthetic of persuasion; or, to put it differently, a perception and appreciation of the persuasory force of style – its capacity to psychagogically beguile and carry off the listener's soul into different tonalities and moods – as a source of pleasure. Dionysius thrills to the emotional roller-coaster of Demosthenes' style, its pitch-perfect deployment of every type of style, its impact on *aisthesis* and affect, its sheer aesthetic force; and he enjoys the serious-minded mood of Isocrates' smooth rhythms and carefully balanced clauses. This way of thinking, with its roots in Archaic thought, is rearticulated in ever more sophisticated forms from early to late antiquity.

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FURTHER READING

Russell's *Criticism in Antiquity* (1981 /1995, chs. 8–9) and Kennedy's "The Evolution of A Theory of Artistic Prose" (1989) represent what might be called the standard modern account of ancient stylistic theory; see also Grube (1965) and Bonner (1939/69). Russell and Wilson (1981) begins to open up that picture by foregrounding the later-antique tendency for ancient poetic genres to be displaced by prose equivalents, which in effect were perceived more or less as "free verse" renderings of the older forms. More recently, Rutherford (1998) places later-antique style theory (particularly Hermogenes) in relation to the literary context of the Antonine Age (the period of the "Second Sophistic") – arguing that the theory was engaged with the intellectual culture of its time, and not an expression of backward-looking classicism. Porter (2009 and 2010, ch. 6) examines at great length (and depth) the perception of "voice" in ancient aesthetic theory and experience; and that account – along with Cicero's and Dionysius' notions of the innate capacity to perceive and respond to the rhythm and "melody" of speech – or Aristotle on the emotional impact of delivery – can interestingly be supplemented with Sacks (2007), an accessible, general-audience account of recent neuroscience on the brain's hard-wired capacities for experiencing music. On literacy training and rhetorical education in the ancient world see Cribiore (2001 and

2007) (which focus, respectively, on Greco-Roman Egypt and Libanius' school in Antioch). The stylistic theory and teaching of Dionysius of Halicarnassus is discussed at length in de Jonge (2008), which relates Dionysius to Hellenistic developments in linguistic analysis, and Walker (2011, ch. 5), which relates him to the sophistic tradition descended from Isocrates.

CHAPTER 12
Sense and Sensation in Music

Armand D'Angour

Responses to Music and *Mousikē*

The lack of any formal articulation in antiquity of the idea of aesthetics necessitates some consideration of approach and definition by anyone who seeks to reflect on the aesthetics of ancient music. If responses to music in antiquity can be shown to have obvious points of contact with modern ones, ancient music might reasonably be addressed from a modern aesthetic perspective. But a further problem arises from the fact that Greek *mousikē* and related ancient words have a different range of reference and associations from our term; so in addition we must first define what we propose to understand by "music." The Muses (from whom the term *mousikē* derives) embraced a variety of disciplines and genres, as suggested by the names given to them in the eighth century BC by Hesiod: Melpomene was to become the Muse of tragic song (*molpē*), Terpsichore of dance (*choreia*), and other Muses were assigned to forms of musico-poetic expression such as epic minstrelsy (Calliope), love poetry (Erato), comedy-pastoral (Thaleia), and historical narrative (Clio).[1] Purely aesthetic considerations would not suffice for the proper appreciation of these genres, most of which are intimately wedded to discursive structures and intellectual content; nor could a single or uniform set of aesthetic categories appropriately address such a disparate range of musico-literary expression. The visual dimension of dance and performance, for instance, might be expected to evoke a different kind of aesthetic response from their audible manifestations, even if the terms used for expressing these responses are similar or related. Thus in Xenophon's *Symposium* (2.15) Socrates commends "a fine-looking [*hōraios*] boy who played the lyre most beautifully [*kalōs*]," by observing: "Do you see how the boy, beautiful [*kalos*] as he is when he's standing still, is even more beautiful [*kalliōn*] when his looks are complemented by the figures of dance?"

The visual aesthetic of music making is central to a well-known anecdote about the young Alcibiades' preference for the lyre over the aulos: "He shunned the aulos as an ignoble and illiberal thing, saying that while the use of plectrum and lyre did not impair the bearing and appearance becoming to a free man, when someone was blowing on an aulos even his own relatives could scarcely recognize his features."[2] When Pausanias records the activity of the fifth-century aulete Pronomus of Thebes, he entirely passes over the musical merits of the famous virtuoso's performances, noting instead that he "delighted his audiences hugely [*perissōs dē ti eterpe*] with the expressions of

his face and movement of his body."[3]

The important place of visual aesthetics for the appreciation of musical performance is something to which my discussion will return. Regarding the auditory dimension, indications of a conventional range of aesthetic responses are found in ancient literary sources in scattered remarks about *mousikē* in general and certain musical performances in particular. *Mousikē* in various forms sounds beautiful, pleasing, and sweet (*kalos*, *hēdus*, *glukus*) and conveys delight, pleasure, and enchantment (*terpsis*, *hēdonē*, *thelxis* etc.: see Halliwell 2011, 45–49). A sung performance might be expected to be heard in rapt or respectful silence (*siōpē*), and music has the power, most often in conjunction with a suitable narrative, to move listeners to joyful laughter or tears.[4] "May I not live if *mousikē* is absent," declares the chorus in Euripides' *Heracles*, intimately linking the pleasure of life itself to the presence of song and dance.[5] The terms in which such pleasure is expressed rarely distinguish which particular aspect or aspects of *mousikē* are responsible for these effects. Ancient listeners were evidently inclined to conflate the effects of musical sound and poetic meaning; in some periods, at least, these two phenomena appear to be considered inseparable at least in principle, if not in practice.[6] In particular, ancient Greek thinkers who speak and write about *mousikē* are less inclined to express aesthetic appreciation than to consider its moral, intellectual, or religious significance. The Muses' perceived relationship to memory (as daughters of Mnemosyne) indicates that they were at least as closely connected to cognitive and semantic content as to those aspects of musical sound and performance to which our conception of "music" commonly relates.

The general emphasis on ethical effects makes clear that *mousikē*, embracing the broad realm of the Muses so personified, was more strongly identified in Classical times with words and meanings (*logos*) than with sound as such. Comments about the musical qualities of a song as distinct from its words, or those of a solo instrumental performance, are virtually nonexistent; a composition is never commended, say, for its music *rather than* its content (or vice versa). Approximations to such a distinction are found in rare comments such as in a passage of Plato's *Ion* where Socrates is arguing that good composers of songs (*melopoioi*) are divinely possessed when they compose their beautiful melodies. As evidence for this claim he adduces the composer Tynnichus of Chalcis, "who never composed a single poem that one would think worth mention other than the paean which everyone sings, virtually the most beautiful [*kalliston*] of all songs [*melē*], simply – as he says himself – 'an invention of the Muses'" (*Ion* 534d5–e1).

Similarly the tragedian Phrynichus (a contemporary of Aeschylus) was evidently less remembered for the literary qualities of his dramas than for his particularly "sweet" music, as several comments by Aristophanes show – "like a honey-bee, Phrynichus was always sipping on the nectar of ambrosial

melodies [*melē*] to bring forth sweet song [*glukeia ōdē*]."[7] The use of the epithet "*glukus*" here assimilates the pleasure of hearing to that of taste, a metaphor also suggested by the near-homophony of *mélē*, songs, and *méli*, honey.[8] But as with other positive epithets commonly used to praise such music and song (such as *kalos* "lovely" and *hēdus*, "pleasant"), the description tells us nothing very specific about the music itself, only that it was considered appealing by listeners.[9] In a passage of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, the character of "Euripides" scorns his rival Aeschylus for being a "useless song-composer [*kakon melopoion*] who always repeats the same thing time and again" (1249–1250). The Aeschylean verses to which he alludes to illustrate this alleged inadequacy are rhythmically identical; they may also have been sung to identical melodies, given that the pitch accents on the words used in the different verses fall in very similar places (Danielewicz 1990; cf. D'Angour 2007, 296–297). But we cannot assume that the issue here is solely musical (in our terms), since "Euripides" also introduces into his parodic critique a repeated verbal refrain of a kind recognizable from Aeschylus' surviving choruses (see Dover 1993 on *Frogs* 1264–1277).

At the same time, music in the modern sense (which I shall maintain henceforth when using the word), principally comprising the elements of melody, rhythm, and instrumental execution, was integral to ancient poetry and song. The sounds of music so occasioned were important both to the Greeks and subsequently to the Romans (who adopted musical traditions from Greece along with literary ones), whether as a vehicle for and accompaniment to words or, less commonly, as purely instrumental expression. The evidence for systematic investigations into the basis of musical sound dating from Archaic Greek times, proceeding alongside musico-poetic achievements in the creation and exposition of new styles of lyric poetry, choral performance, and religious song, indicate that the aesthetic effects of the sounds produced by voices or instruments might long have been considered as independent of the content of songs. Auditory experimentation and investigations into musical sounds are attested from at least the sixth century BC, when Pythagoras of Samos is credited with discovering the mathematical basis of musical intervals, and when the professional musician and instrumentalist Lasus of Hermione allegedly wrote the first treatise on *mousikē*.[10] Once elements such as rhythm, melody, dynamics, tempi, and instrumental timbre were recognized as independent components of musical expression, their potential aesthetic effects might be thought no less noteworthy than the emotional and ethical significance of the words and poetry with which they were usually associated. It may be significant that Pindar, who was alleged to be a pupil of Lasus, makes an unusual and extended address to the "golden lyre" in his first Pythian Ode (1–14), dwelling on the hypnotic and pleasurable effects created by the instrument's "shafts" of sound.[11] The passage leaves no doubt that the object of praise is the sound made by the instrument, as its vibrating strings strike up the opening rhythm and set the *harmonia* for the chorus's song and

dance:

Golden lyre, possession and spokesman of Apollo and of the

violet-haired Muses, the footstep takes your lead

as it begins the glorious show,

and the singers heed your signals

when pulsating you strike up

the preludes that give a lead to the chorus … (1–4)

The philosophical idealization of the notion of *mousikē*, however, prevents writers on the subject from offering an analysis of how or why the sounds of music on their own can afford sensations of a more or less pleasurable kind. The extended discussions of Plato and Aristotle revolve predominantly around the different kinds of ethical character (*ēthos*) associated with and imparted by different rhythms and *harmoniai* (musical modes). Plato's main concern was that these have the power – through some mimetic process that he assumes but never fully explains – to affect the condition of the *psūchē*. In consequence, "those who are looking for the best kind of singing and music must look not for the kind that is pleasant but that which is correct; an imitation would be correct, we say, if it ended up being like the object imitated in quantity and in quality" (*Laws* 668b4–7). The acknowledged pleasure afforded by music should, in Plato's view, be guided to good purpose through the use of reason (*logos*):

> The function of compositions that make use of audible sound is to express harmony. Harmony has motions akin to the revolutions in our *psūchai*; it is a gift of the Muses if we engage with it intelligently, i.e. not for the sake of irrational pleasure [*alogos hēdonē*] in the way most people now make use of it, but as an ally for bringing order to the revolutions in *psūchai* that have lost their harmony so as to restore them to concord. Rhythm was also bestowed by the Muses to assist us, since most people have lost a sense of measure and are lacking in the graces [*charites*].
>
> (*Timaeus* 47c7–d7)

Plato's admission that *alogos hēdonē* (literally "pleasure without *logos*") is the most common effect of music indicates that the predominant response was indeed an aesthetic one, involving an engagement of the senses with musical sound rather than simply an ethical or cognitive approval of poetic content. In Plato's view, such a response is only acceptable if it is ultimately subject to reason (*logos*). In practice, this means so long as the choice of *mousikē* is guided by the judgments of older and wiser men whose notions of pleasure are better informed than those of the man in the street:

> I agree with the majority of people that pleasure is a proper criterion in the

> arts, but not the pleasure experienced by just anybody. The finest productions of the Muses are those that please men of high calibre and sufficient education, and particularly if they appeal to one whose education and moral standards surpasses those of others.
>
> (*Laws* 658e6–659a1)

Aristotle takes a more down-to-earth view than Plato, arguing that music (including purely instrumental music) can be beneficial as a means of relaxation (*anapausis*) and a source of social enjoyment:[12]

> It is generally agreed that the conduct of one's life should allow not only nobility but pleasure, since happiness comes from a combination of the two. We all say that music, whether purely instrumental or accompanied by song, is one of the most pleasant things: as Musaeus says, "song is the sweetest thing to men." People quite reasonably use music in social gatherings and recreations, since it can bring joy.
>
> (*Politics* 1339b20–24)

Aristotle follows Plato in supposing that ethical criteria should be used to guide listeners' choice of music. He differs from his teacher, however, in his assessment of the ethical effects of specific *harmoniai* ("modes"):

> The Socrates of Plato's *Republic* is wrong to retain the Phrygian along with the Dorian, especially since among the instruments the aulos is one that he rejects. Among the *harmoniai* the Phrygian has the same power as the aulos does among instruments, since both bring about ecstasy and emotionality: all Bacchic revelry and all dancing of that kind is done to the *auloi*.
>
> (*Politics* 1342a33–b5)

Given the potential for this kind of disagreement, the criteria for discriminating between the strictly musical value of different kinds of poem, each with more or less distinctive modal and rhythmical associations, might appear to involve little more than personal taste and subjective evaluations of the subjects of song. Thus the speaker in Plato's *Laws* (658d6–8) observes that "we old men would derive most pleasure from listening to a rhapsode giving a good performance of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* or of one of Hesiod's works." Since rhapsodic performance was not sung or accompanied by instruments (though it involved rhythmical recitation, and perhaps a heightened form of quasi-melodic recitation), the positive ethical associations ascribed by the Plato to the "music" of Homer and Hesiod will have been heavily dependent on their subject matter (heroic, religious and so on); in short, Plato is thinking of *mousikē*, not music. Similar judgments in other cases are likely to have been based on the import of the poetry rather than the particular rhythms, melodies, or instruments that complemented the words.

Aside from their ethical preoccupations with *mousikē*, however, the philosophers are clear that music can provide straightforwardly auditory pleasure. In Plato's *Philebus* Socrates reminds his interlocutor that the pleasure of sound is a "natural" phenomenon: "sounds which are smooth and clear and emit a single pure note are beautiful, not relatively, but absolutely, and there are pleasures which relate to these by nature and result from them."[13] Plato's recognition of the sheer sensual power of sound is evidenced by his concern that a young man should not be "unharmonized" by allowing music "to captivate his *psūchē* with its piping, and to pour into his *psūchē* through his ears (as through a funnel) the sweet and soft and mournful *harmoniai* we just discussed, so that he spends his whole life humming, enraptured by song …" (*Republic* 411a5–9). By the first century BC, however, the Epicurean writer Philodemus could assert that such qualities of sound might evoke nothing more than aesthetic responses, and that the allegedly ethical effects of music arise solely from the import of the words it accompanies.[14] The function of music, he argues, is to provide pleasure or entertainment (*hēdonē*, *psūchagōgiā*) through sound alone, which plays no part in rational thought: "Musicians also produce pieces which have no significance, such as instrumental music and trills […] Men like Pindar and Simonides were not simply musicians, but musicians *and* poets: it is as musicians that they gave pleasure, and as poets that they wrote the words" (*On Music* 4, 143.17–21, 27–33 Delattre).

However, despite such acknowledgments of the frankly aesthetic appeal of music per se, we find no systematic explanations of how the distinctive elements of musical sound – its specific rhythms, *harmoniai*, instrumental timbres and so on – achieve their effects, pleasurable or otherwise. One of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems* (19.38) delineates the kind of argument that appealed to the philosophers:

> Why does everyone enjoy rhythm and melody and all concordant sounds? Is it because we naturally enjoy all natural movements? An indication of this is that children enjoy these from the moment they are born. We enjoy different kinds of melody because of their *ēthos*, but we enjoy rhythm because it is divided up in a distinctive and regular way and moves us in an orderly manner. Orderly movement is more closely akin to us than disorderly, so is more natural.

Even if it were accepted that what is "natural and orderly" is a prerequisite for pleasure (and the Greeks themselves were aware, often uncomfortably, that unnatural sound effects and irregular rhythms could be no less appealing to listeners), surviving ancient treatments give limited help in explaining how music achieves its aesthetic impact in practice. To attempt to do this we need to shed the idealizing straitjacket of philosophers and, taking our cue from their hints that ancient audiences were at least as sensitive to the aesthetics of musical sound as to the ethos of *mousikē*, direct our attention to actual

examples of surviving ancient music.

Elements of Greek Musical Sound

What particular properties of musical sound might have evoked an aesthetic response in ancient ears, and how? My principal aim in what follows will be to consider how specific instances of the elements of music that we can detect in ancient poetry or in descriptions of performance might have aroused aesthetic perceptions in ancient listeners. For this purpose it is helpful that, in the Greek context, the material from which the principal elements of musical sound arise, rhythm and melody, were to a large extent based the spoken language (Allen 1974 , 114–119). Spoken Greek had a natural quantitative rhythm and an intrinsic melodic component. The former arose from the length on which speakers dwelled on individual syllables of words, and the latter was in due course indicated by the placing of accents over vowels to indicate a relative rise or fall in pitch (Probert 2003, 3–8). Both the melodic contours of the language and its verbal rhythms formed inescapable aspects of Archaic and Classical song, *melos* – a term that embraces the great majority of what are thought of and read today as the poetic and literary products of ancient Greece. The aesthetic appeal of these musical compositions was appreciated as undeniably as their intellectual brilliance was admired. They cover some four hundred years of Greek "song-culture" (Herington 1985, 3–4), from the epics of Homer (who uses the term *aoidē*, minstrelsy, rather than *mousikē* or *melos*) to the songs (*melē*) of "lyric" poets – technically those composed with lyre accompaniment, but standardly encompassing those sung to the accompaniment of *auloi* – and the choral episodes and solo arias composed by the Attic dramatists for performance in the theater.

Insofar as poetic texts embody ancient rhythms and melodies, we may discern in them aesthetically appealing features of musical sound. But in addition to the songs that survive solely in the form of literary texts, some precious fragments of ancient Greek music survive inscribed on stone and papyrus, and detailed explanations of the notation used in these documents are preserved from late antiquity. The fragments offer invaluable indications of how ancient music and song were heard and played in practice. Scholarly work in recent decades (e.g. West 1992; Pöhlmann and West 2001) has led to the accurate transcription into modern musical notation of the bulk of musically notated papyri and inscriptions, which mostly date from around the third century BC to the third century AD but give indications of the nature of Greek music from an earlier period. As a result, we now have ready access to several dozen preserved texts which can be sung, played, and heard as music much as they would have been heard in ancient times. These documents challenge scholars to reflect on the aesthetics of ancient musical sounds in a more precise and focused manner than would have been possible in the absence of the musical notation. In addition to these, we have ancient testimonies to purely

instrumental composition, music unaccompanied by words or voice on lyre, aulos, and other instruments. While instrumental music cannot be reconstituted with accuracy, the descriptions of one early solo composition, the *Pūthikos nomos*, as well as of other *nomoi* (set-piece musical performances) composed by later fifth-century musicians, can help us to reconstruct elements of what was considered by some listeners to be the aesthetic appeal of musical sounds with or without vocal accompaniment.

Where ancient commentators speak of the aesthetic qualities of music, they usually do so in general terms, that is, what makes its sound appealing or beautiful to the senses. The existence of the musical fragments puts us in a position to ask more focused questions about the appeal of the few specific instances of musical expression that we possess, and to make some tentative generalizations on the strength of such scrutiny. The distinction between general and particular is familiar in relation to literary texts: readers are apt to consider the effect of a specific line or passage in, say, Homer or Sophocles, more often than that of epic or tragedy as a whole. The question arises how legitimately, in the absence of explicit ancient testimonies regarding the effects of particular musical compositions that survive, we can attempt to derive aesthetic responses from, or project our own aesthetic perceptions onto, the structures and sounds that emerge with direct specificity from the musical documents. But it may be that, while exercising caution about our conclusions, we can make meaningful aesthetic judgments about some of the particular musical compositions and fragments that have come down to us from antiquity, in much the same way as we can attempt to evaluate phonemic, lexemic, and rhythmical elements that are heard to arise from the words and meters of Greek and Latin verse.

Aesthetics of Ancient Rhythm

When it is sometimes erroneously stated that ancient Greek music is "lost," the intended reference is invariably to melody. The modern Western notion of "music" tends to privilege its melodic component. Rhythm, however, is equally central to musical expression, and arguably more important for the identity and structuring of a musical composition: as an ancient author observed, "melody in itself is lax and inert, but when combined with rhythm it becomes well-defined and dynamic" (Ps.-Arist. *Pr.* 19.49). The exuberant complexity and structural diversity of ancient meters suggest that rhythm presented itself to ancient senses as an equally if not more salient feature of music than melody.[15] While we are told virtually nothing of standalone rhythmical patterns produced on percussion instruments such as drums and castanets, or in auletic and kitharistic performances (pipe or lyre solos), some of these patterns may have been imitative of those that depended on the rhythms of spoken Greek, that is, derived from the "heavy" and "light" syllables of the words.[16] These patterns, as used in poetic verse, were

subsequently formalized, with inevitably reductive consequences, as the purely quantitative system used in Greek metrics.

The distinctness, variety, and precision of Classical Greek meters indicate the importance they had for the enjoyment and appreciation of *mousikē*. "Imagine," asks Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Demosthenes* 48.23–26), "if someone sang or played the most beautiful melody but paid no attention to the rhythm, would anyone tolerate this kind of music-making?" Scant comment survives from antiquity, however, concerning exactly how rhythms or meters were supposed to work their effects. Ancient authors are prone to generalize regarding the effects of meter or rhythm rather than tie them down to cited instantiations. Aristotle, for instance, notes (*Poetics* 1459b34–35) that the rhythm of epic, the dactylic hexameter, is "the stateliest and weightiest" of the verse forms. His observation reflects less an aesthetic than an "ethical" response, though the terms of his assessment might be felt to overlap, as often in this regard, with aesthetic criteria. Aristotle was clearly influenced in his observation by the fact that the hexameter was the meter of Homer's *Iliad*, the most celebrated and familiar narrative embodiment of the heroic ethos for Greek listeners and readers. The sense of weight and dignity associated with the Iliadic narrative will have been enhanced by the use of the meter for theogonies, hymns, oracles, and solemn pronouncements.[17] However, the dactylic hexameter was also used from early times for less solemn and dignified subject matter. Many verses and passages in the *Odyssey*, the Hesiodic corpus, the Homeric hymns, and the surviving fragments of the epic cycle exhibit little sense of weighty grandeur. The sympotic quip that survives from the eighth century as one of the earliest of Greek verse inscriptions on the so-called "Cup of Nestor" (see Powell 1991, 165–167) uses dactylic hexameters in a way that seems to mock the meter's claim to sublimity. The hexameter was eventually to be used as the meter of Latin satire, despite – or perhaps thanks to – its traditional associations with heroic epic. The sound of the hexameter, used for a self-consciously lowbrow genre, could afford no less pleasure and pain (if of a different kind from that of heroic epic) to hearers.[18] Despite Aristotle's pronouncement, then, the meter on its own cannot be linked to any particular ethos, nor will it have evoked a determinate aesthetic response.

Some ancient commentators imply a connection between the effects of particular meters and the formal properties that they take pains to detail. Thus Aristotle's pupil Aristoxenus of Tarentum, following notions ascribed by Plato (*Republic* 400b1–c4) to the influential fifth-century musician Damon of Oea, categorizes the dactylic genre as "equal" (i.e. one of those meters whose feet consist of two parts of equal duration). Aristides Quintilianus (who draws heavily on Aristoxenus) writes (1.24.2–3,10–12): "The fact that it always has a long syllable in first place affords it a greater solemnity than all the other meters … the hexameter is more solemn than the others both because of its

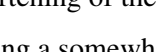
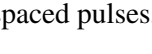
length, and because it begins with a long syllable and has an ending of substantial dimensions" (i.e. the final foot of the verse has two long positions, the latter of which may contain a short syllable). These properties, combined with the regularity and repetitiveness of the dactylic hexameter verse, might combine in some ears to make such a metrical form "stately," at least relative to other meters with less "equal" or regular properties, such as the dochmiac (which I consider below). Such identifiable formal aspects again do not, however, entail a particular ethical or aesthetic response. Greek metrical systems in general do not reflect ethos: that is, the specific patterns of long and short syllables that comprise identifiable metrical cola, verses, and stanzas do not (with a couple of exceptions) themselves determine or create distinct emotional or ethical effects in poetry.[19] These effects occasionally arise, it is argued (e.g. in Morgan 2010, 8–10), because certain meters came to be conventionally associated with certain genres, or with particular kinds of content and character. By and large, only the verbal content can have a determinate and identifiable effect on the emotions; but that leaves a space which might have been filled by the aesthetics of musical sound.

Aristides Quintilianus (2.11.35–42) touches on the way aesthetic considerations may depend on structural aspects of words and meters: "Long syllables create magnificence in diction, short ones the opposite […] Feet in which long syllables come first, or cannot be resolved, or form the foot's boundaries, or are in the majority, are the most elegant and dignified […] Those in which short syllables predominate are plainer and less elevated." In practice, we may recognize that the composition of verses using predominantly long or short syllables creates a far greater variety of aesthetic effects than those described. Some of these are obviously intended to be mimetic. Thus we find in the *Iliad* a wholly spondaic verse, the sound of which clearly aims to represent the emotional keening of Achilles over his slain companion (*Il.* 23.221), ψυχὴν κικλήσκων Πατροκλήος δειλοῖο, "repeatedly calling on the spirit of poor Patroclus." Elsewhere predominantly dactylic verses depict the agitated galloping of mules (*Il.* 23.116) πολλὰ δ᾽ἄναντα κάταντα πάραντά τε δόχμια τ᾽ ἦλθον, "they went up and down and back and forth and to and fro," or (in the *Odyssey)* to imitate the clattering descent of Sisyphus's rock (*Od.*11.598) αὖτις ἔπειτα πέδονδε κυλίνδετο λᾶας ἀναιδής, "then again the irrepressible boulder tumbled back down to the plain." Such "metrical onomatopoeia" is combined with suggestive assonance and consonant clusters, such as the repeated λη- of the former that mimics the sound of wailing, and the plosive consonants – π, τ, δ, κ – of the dactylic examples which represent the rattling of hooves or the clattering of the boulder over rocks. Verbal music of this kind, of which many instances of a more subtle kind may be detected, is more regularly found in Latin verse; however, the occasions for purely mimetic effects in poetry are infrequent (and such effects would become hackneyed if overused).

While the above examples point to an undoubted awareness of Greek musician-poets and their followers that metrical devices, along with other aural techniques, might be employed for aesthetic function and effect, they are not highlighted in this way by ancient theorists, who tend to concentrate on the imagery evoked by a poet's choice of words rather than on the qualities of rhythm and sound. This may be because metrical effects were largely taken for granted; but it is also significant that the dynamic rhythm (i.e. the pulse) of Greek verse may have been articulated by bodily movement rather than in the enunciation of words. Thus Aristides writes (1.13.16–22):

> Rhythm as a whole is perceived by these three senses: sight, as in dancing; hearing, as in melody, and touch, by which we perceive, for instance, the pulsations of our arteries. Musical rhythm is perceived by two of them, sight and hearing. In music, rhythm is imposed on the movement of the body, on melody, and on diction, either on their own or in conjunction with the others.

While bodily sensation is the basis for both the generation and the aesthetic appeal of rhythm, the purely quantitative study of meter elides any presence of a felt pulse. Aristoxenus speaks of *arsis* and *basis* in metrical feet, terms which refer literally to the "raising" and "stepping" of a dancer's feet (the term *thesis* for "placing" is later more common), but he leaves unclear how the rhythmical pulse of a particular meter was heard in practice. A few instances of the use of diacritical marks on the musical documents, in the form of dots or points (*stigmai*) placed above syllables and indicative of *arsis*, give pointers to how certain rhythms may have worked in practice. While they give invaluable indications of the rhythmical "feel" of some metrical systems, they equally importantly demonstrate that we cannot wholly rely on our own rhythmical assumptions or aesthetic intuitions when attempting to appreciate the pulse of Greek meter.

The discrepancy is demonstrated when we consider the meter of the Seikilos epitaph, a complete four-line song dating from around AD 200 inscribed on a marble column. The song's meter is iambic, and it contains both syncopation (literally "elided beats," but in practice a prolongation of syllables) and resolution (two light syllables in place of a heavy one). The second line, μηδὲν ὅλως σὺ λυποῦ, standardly scanned – ∪ ∪ – ∪ – –, is likely to be read by a modern reader (in the absence of other indications) with dynamic stresses on the long positions and a compensatory shortening of the value of the double-short element  , creating a somewhat insistent and offbeat effect (cf. West 1992, 23–24). The duration signs and *stigmai* show, however, that the intended rhythm had evenly-spaced pulses, ΜΗδεν ΟΛως ∑Υ λυΠΟΥ  , as indicated by the modern transcription shown in Figure 12.1:

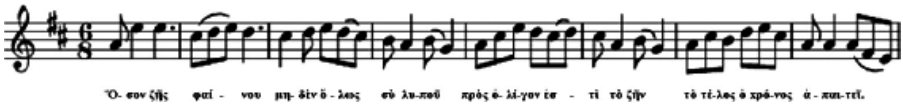
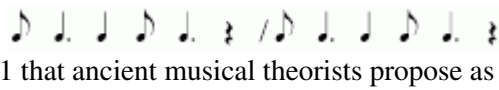
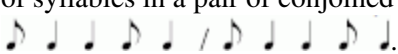


Figure 12.1 The Song of Seikilos with modern musical notation.

This shows clearly that the repeated emphasis on heavy elements and undue correption of short ones has no place in the correct rhythmical interpretation of this meter. The resulting aesthetic effect is tranquil and measured – clearly more appropriate to the meaning of the words composed here to this rhythm ("let nothing pain you in any way").

Another instance of counterintuitive rhythmical indications, this time from the Classical period, appears on the papyrus fragment that contains part of a choral ode from Euripides' *Orestes* (338–344), including what scholars generally suppose was Euripides' own musical setting. The ode is in dochmiacs, a meter found in choral passages in every extant Greek tragedy and known for exhibiting qualities of agitation or passion (as accompanying words make explicit). The agitation is inscribed into the meter's irregular pattern of heavy and light syllables, and is intensified by its tendency to admit extensive resolution (the replacement of a heavy position by two light ones) and to "drag" syllables (so that they become heavy where they are standardly light in that position of the meter). The basic dochmiac colon is ∪ – – ∪ – (short–long–long–short–long), and when a reader stresses the heavy positions the result is the rhythm of the mnemonic "the wise kangaroos [*di dum*] / prefer boots to shoes [*di dum*]." This realization of the meter also serves to regularize it by attributing syllable durations to each metron of 1-3-2-1-3 +2 (i.e. ending with two beats rest, ). This contravenes the ratio of 2:1 that ancient musical theorists propose as the standard relation of heavy to light syllables, making the correct time durations of syllables in a pair of conjoined dochmiac cola 1-2-2-1-2/1-2-2-1-2, or  . The papyrus marks *stigmai* over the first and third syllables, thus indicating that the dancer's feet should come down to the ground on the second and fourth (+ fifth) elements of the pattern. These syllables are likely, therefore, to have borne the dynamic stress (at least in this passage), which produces a very different effect: a more accurate mnemonic (with stresses italicized) would run "that *ol*' man *riv*er, he *jus*' keeps *ro*lling" (cf. D'Angour 2006b). The correct time durations splits the colon into an unequal ratio of syllable durations (3:5), reinforcing what ancient musical authors speak of as the "mixed" rhythm of the dochmiac: with its cross-rhythms and offbeat stresses, this was a "naturally" agitated rhythm.

The offbeat nature of the dochmiac bespeaks a connection between the use of particular metrical patterns and the evocation of different kinds of aesthetic appreciation. "Compound rhythms are more emotional," writes Aristides (2.15.34–44),

> because the rhythms which constitute them are generally unequal. The impression they give is turbulent, because the pattern by which they are constructed doesn't keep the same order of parts – sometimes starting long and ending short, sometimes the reverse, sometimes starting with a downstep and other times not … By imposing a diversity of movement on the body they lead the mind into great confusion.

In a fragment from an early fifth-century satyr-chorus by Pratinas of Phlius, the dramatist employs a medley of different metrical cola, drawing explicit attention to the agitated conflict of rhythm and melody by coining the extravagant compound word παραμελορυθμοβάταν, "rhythm-tune-step-violating." With their effusive verbal expressions, the satyrs condemn the transgressive volubility of the aulos, mimicking through sound and rhythms the restless excitement aroused by the instrument's sonic effects:

What commotion is this? What are these dance-steps?

What outrage has reached the noisy altar of Dionysos? …

Strike the pipe with its breath of dappled toad!

Burn the spit-consuming reed with its deep-voiced chatter,

the rhythm-tune-step-violating [παραμελορυθμοβάταν] body

moulded by the drill! (*PMG* 708: 1–2, 10–2)

The surviving lyrics of late fifth-century "New Musicians" such as Timotheus of Miletus demonstrate a similar rhythmical freedom and exuberance, of a kind that made them feel strikingly "lawless" (*paranomos*) to musical traditionalists but ensured widespread popularity and continued appeal for centuries (Csapo and Wilson 2009).

A different but related kind of rhythmical tension enriches the music of Latin poetry, the bulk of which employs meters adopted directly from Greek forms.[20] The natural dynamic stress of Latin words may be made to coincide or conflict with the pulse of the meter for expressive effect, particularly in aiding the verse to mimic the effect either of speed or of slow movement. Thus we find complete coincidence in the mellifluous Ennian line (with word stresses here indicated by accents) *lábitur úncta carína per aéquora cána celócis* ("the cutter's polished keel glides through the grey water") and in the Virgilian verse *spárgens úmida mélla sopóriferúmque papáver* (*Aen.* 4.486: "sprinkling liquid honey and sleep-inducing poppy-seed"); while the clashes of word stress with metrical pulse in the first half of the heavily spondaic line *appárent rári nántes in gúrgite vásto* ("they appear here and there, swimming in the vast ocean swell") sonically mimics the gradual, measured emergence into view of sailors submerged in the ocean. Such self-conscious plays with accent and ictus are a notable aspect of L.P. Wilkinson's still unsurpassed demonstration of "golden Latin artistry" (Wilkinson 1963, in particular 120–

134), and represent some of the most musically expressive and aesthetically appealing uses of meter by the Roman poets.

Aesthetics of Melody, Voice, and Instruments

The aesthetics of sound quality and melodic composition are no better served by ancient comments and analyses than the aesthetics of rhythms and meter. The Greek term commonly used to commend a quality of musical sound produced by voices or instruments is *ligus*, "clear" or "penetrating." Pseudo-Aristotle (*De Audibilibus* 804a21–28) describes the quality as

> pure and concentrated, like the voices of cicadas, grasshoppers, and nightingales, and generally like any pure vocal emission with no extraneous noise mixed in. It is characterized not by loud volume, low register, or interacting sounds, but by a high-pitched utterance that is pure and well-defined.

Ligus is found with reference to both human and animal voices, and to instruments that include both the lyre and the auloi. The appreciation of sonic qualities was bound to be partly a matter of taste, which Plato connected (*Laws* 655d7–e5) to the moral inclinations of individual hearers:

> People to whom what is said or sung or performed in any way is congenial (on the basis of their nature, habits, or both together) enjoy them and praise them, and are bound to call them good. Those to whose nature or disposition or habit they are contrary cannot enjoy or praise them, and must call them bad.

Aristides Quintilianus (2.16.17–22) follows Plato's lead in connecting the enjoyment of particular instruments to the way these "imitate" the particular *ēthos* of a hearer: "Just as no one kind of voice or *harmonia* is pleasing to every listener, but one gives delight to some and another to others, so with instruments, whatever sounds a particular character resembles will lead him to enjoy and approve of the corresponding instruments." Plato insisted, however, that music can only be judged good if it is "correct" in its imitation of action and character, so how should such correctness be interpreted in practice? As regards the use of instruments, Plato proposed banning the aulos altogether from his ideal state, not because of the sounds it produced (though its sheer volume and volubility may have added to its excessive and disreputable associations) but because of its suspect "panharmonism," that is, its ability to be played in all the different *harmoniai.* Such versatility (*poluharmonia*) attested to its promiscuous character by comparison with instruments such as the lyre, whose strings would have to be tuned to one particular *harmonia* and (ideally) would not deviate from that mode.[21]

Styles of musical composition should similarly be restricted, in Plato's view, to what is appropriate and fitting for mimetic purposes:

> The Muses would never make so gross an error as to compose words suitable for men and then give the melody a colouring suitable to women, to put together a melody and postures of free men, and then fit to them rhythms proper to slaves and servile persons … nor would they ever put together in the same piece the sounds of wild beasts and men and instruments, and noises of all sorts, ostensibly in imitation of a single object.
>
> (*Laws* 669c3–d2)

The objects of Plato's distaste will have included popular bravura instrumental performances of pieces for solo kithara and aulos, the latter being well exemplified by the *Pūthikos nomos*, a musical depiction of the myth of Apollo's slaying of the python at Delphi. This variegated five-part competition piece, composed and performed by the sixth-century piper Sakadas of Argos, included virtuoso technical devices such as the use of the aulos to imitate the hissing of the dying snake. A prize-winning fifth-century re-performance of the "many-headed *nomos*," a piece with similar mimetic and structural qualities, may be the event celebrated by Pindar in his 12th Pythian Ode (see Phillips 2013). The longevity of these pieces suggests that Greek audiences were enthralled by their mimetic extravagance and variety.[22] Plato's repeated repudiation of "common" musical taste indicates that the majority of hearers did not share his aesthetic conservatism in this respect. A similar expressive mimeticism informed the *nomoi* of Timotheus, which boldly exploited musical onomatopoeia and dynamic extremes: we are told (Athenaeus 8. 337f, 352a) of the representation of a storm in his *Nauplios* and of Semele's cries in *Birthpangs of Semele* (Csapo and Wilson 2009, 283).

The fact that the *Pūthikos nomos*, as an auletic composition, had no place for words (*logos*) will have compounded its ethical baseness in Plato's eyes. "Correctness" for Plato would require, at least partly, that musical sound conform accurately to the rhythms and pitches of spoken Greek:

> We should not pursue intricately varied rhythms with every kind of motion, but find the rhythms that belong to an orderly and upright life. When we have found them we must make the foot and the melody follow the words proper to such a life, and not make the words follow the foot and the melody.
>
> (*Republic* 399c9–400a2)

The musical documents appear to obey Plato's strictures, in that the melodies are for the most part composed according to the pitch profiles of Greek words. This conformity would have made the melodization seem "natural" to traditionally minded listeners, and it was something that a musically educated youngster in Classical times was trained to observe by his instructor: "When they have taught him the use of the lyre, they introduce him to the poems of other excellent poets – the lyric poets – setting their verses to the lyre, and

familiarizing the children's *psūchai* to their rhythms and *harmoniai*" (*Protagoras* 326a6–b2).

Conformity to the rhythms of everyday speech will standardly have required setting no more than a single musical note of appropriate duration to a syllable, a practice indicated by the strictness with which meters are generally handled and responsional verse is composed. "Every Greek poet was his own composer," writes A.M. Dale (1969, 161), "and no poet would write words in elaborate metrical schemes merely to annihilate and overlay these by a different musical rhythm." Aristophanes' sustained parody of the extended prolongation of the first syllable of *heilisso* in *Frogs* may point to Euripides' violation of this principle.[23] Deliberate deviation from pitch accents in a composed melody may also have been a New Musical innovation adopted or even pioneered by Euripides (D'Angour 2006a). Significantly, such non-conformity is a feature of the *Orestes* musical papyrus, where the melodic line appears to be composed to match words' meanings rather than the pitch inflections: thus *katolophuromai* ("I lament") and *kathiketeuomai* ("I beseech") are set to a falling cadence, while the third syllable of *anabakcheuei* ("[my heart] leaps like a bacchant") is set to a higher-pitched note than the preceding words. This kind of "program music" may have been considered a notable feature of the New Musicians' oeuvre (see D'Angour, forthcoming), and to many listeners it will have represented an emotionally powerful, rather than simply disreputable, aspect of the avant-garde musical aesthetic.

A more general concern with the aesthetic qualities of vocal and instrumental sound is clear not only from theoretical discussions but from the account of an early practical experiment. In the late sixth century BC, Lasus of Hermione composed a dithyramb (a song danced in honor of Dionysus) which did not include the sound *s*, ostensibly for aesthetic reasons: according to Aristoxenus (fr. 87=Ath.11.467), "musicians did not like the sound of the s because it clashed with the sound of the aulos." Lasus was credited with reforming the genre of dithyramb in Athens, and the opening of Pindar's second dithyramb alludes to a change in the form of the dance:

In former times the singing of dithyrambs came

stretched out like a measuring line,

and the *s*-sound emerged base-born to people from singers' mouths.

But now young men are spread out wide

in well-centered circles, well acquainted with

how the Olympians too, in the presence of Zeus' scepter,

celebrate the rite of Bromios in their halls.[24]

This change to which these lines allude was evidently a technical measure: Lasus reformed the dance from a straight line into the circle with which the genre became identified (in the fifth century it was familiarly known as the "ring dance," *kuklios choros*). By this restructuring Lasus overcame the problem of "bastard" sibilants emitted by a large, poorly coordinated chorus which consisted, in the case of the Classical dithyramb, of 50 men or boys. The hissing of *s*'s produced by such a large number of mouths, in conjunction with the reedy sound of the aulos, was no doubt reminiscent of the mimetic use of the instrument in pieces such as the *Pūthikos* and "many-headed" *nomos* (Porter 2007, 10–21); such an association in the context of performances related to Dionysus rather than to Apollo may have sharpened Lasus' aesthetic fastidiousness. By reforming a previously linear formation into a circular format, the aulete could stand in the center in full view of all the dancers and help ensure that the sound of pipes and voices combined was *ligus*, unsullied by excessive sibilance. Pindar describes the new circles as (by reconstruction) "well-centered" (*euomphaloi*) and goes on to compare the dance formation to that of the gods on Olympus: clearly Lasus' reform was aesthetically satisfying in visual as well as auditory terms (Cf. D'Angour 1997, 339).

Conclusion

This discussion has sought to make a start on something that ancient authors themselves did not attempt, in seeking to elicit indications of aesthetic effects from the kinds of musical sound that may be identified from passages of ancient poetry and from musical texts and inscriptions. As music was rarely thought in antiquity to achieve its effects in isolation from poetic content, ancient thinkers were inclined to speak about *mousikē* in ethical rather than aesthetic terms. Subsequent scholarship on ancient music has accordingly been hampered both by influential discussions of *ēthos* and by its neglect of the distinction that may be drawn between music and *mousikē* – a distinction for which the ancient testimony is sufficiently clear, even if it is not dwelt on at any length in the sources. In consequence, while *mousikē* in its wide manifestations offers an endlessly rich subject of study, I hope to have shown that there is also room for reflection on the aesthetic significance – an admittedly modern category of thought – of the sounds of music in their own right.

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FURTHER READING

M.L. West’s *Ancient Greek Music* (Oxford 1992) is an indispensable guide to the subject: a scholarly and readable synthesis of the evidence for ancient Greek music, with a clear exposition of the ancient notation and a collection of the most important melodies in modern transcription. It has been updated in respect of the musically notated documents by Pöhlmann and West (2001), now the standard edition with musical transcriptions. Of paramount importance for understanding ancient Greek ideas about music is the two-volume collection of translated texts by Andrew Barker. *Greek Musical Writings* Vol. 1, *The Musician and His Art* (1984) contains passages from poets, philosophers, and historians, while Vol. 2, *Harmonic and Acoustic Theory*, contains the major theoretical treatises, including of Aristoxenus, Ptolemy and Aristides Quintilianus (but regrettably not Philodemus’ fragmentary *On Music*). The more obscure area of Roman music is admirably treated (in German) by Wille (1967), and aesthetic issues are raised in Moore (2012); for the aesthetics of Latin metrical usage, Wilkinson’s (1963) sensitive interpretation remains required reading.

NOTES

1 Hesiod appears to have invented the nine Muses’ names himself (West 1966 , 32), but their identification with subsequent musico-literary genres was

made in Hellenistic times.

2 Plut. *Alc*. 2.5.2–6.1. Aristotle (*Pol.* 1341b2–8) recounts the myth of Athena's rejecting the lyre but suggests that the point was that "training in aulos-playing has no effect on the intelligence, whereas we attribute science and art to Athena." It may be noted that the true cause of auletes' puffed-out cheeks was wind-players' technique, the use of "circular breathing."

3 Paus. 9.12.6; West (1992, 106) takes this to mean "facial composure," but given the delight taken in this Elvis Presley of antiquity, it is more likely to signify an unusual intensity of expression.

4 Cf. Peponi (2012, 29–32) on the "tacit audience"; joyful laughter: e.g. *H. Hom. Herm*. 419–420; tears as "mixed pleasure," Peponi (2012, 51–58).

5 Eur. *Her.* 676; Halliwell (2012) explores the range of *amousia*, noting that the idea "cuts across what modern categorization might demarcate as separate domains of aesthetic, emotional, educational, and ethical experience" (21).

6 Havelock (1963) makes a strong claim for inextricability, affirmed by Ford (2003, 8–9).

7 Ar. *Av*. 748–751; cf. *Vesp*. 220. Barker (1984, 111 n.49) suggests that the compliment should not be taken at face value as it usually is; but rather than implying any disavowal of the quality of Phrynichus' music, the humor here may reside in the comedian's recycling of the extravagant metaphor of the bee (as found in Pindar *P.* 10.53 etc.).

8 E.g. *H. Hom. Aph*. 519 (*meligērun aoidēn*), Ar. *Ran.* 1301 (reading *meli*) etc. I have added the pitch accents to emphasize the close homophony. The echo of *mélē* and *mélei* ("it is of concern") is also played upon in ancient texts (cf. D'Angour 2005, 99): music is both a means of "amusement" and something to which listeners and performers devote "care."

9 The impossibility of capturing the essence or effect of music in language is notorious. As Dewey (1980 [1934], 74) observes, "There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by immediately visible and audible qualities, and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence."

10 If, as West (1992, 225) suggests, Lasus coined the word, the separation of purely musical sound from the wider semantic import of *mousikē* might be implicit in its coinage.

11 Pi. *P*. 1.1–14; the use of *kēla*, shafts (13) puns on *kēleō*, "enchant," while *rhīpai* (10) "showers" (of notes) picks up the description of the eagle's

back being "wettened" (*hugron*, 9) by the lyre's outpourings.

12 This does not preclude Aristotle from supposing that listening to music intelligently also has a place in the ethical pursuit of leisure (*scholē*): see *Pol.* 1339a25–26; Destrée (2013, 318).

13 Pl. *Phlb.* 51d6–9. The description is reminiscent of the way the sound of the plucked bowstring in *Odyssey* 21.411 "sang out beautifully, like the voice of a swallow" (on what is meant by a "swallow's voice," see Borthwick 1984).

14 Cf. Wilkinson (1938). The Epicurean rejection of ethos is anticipated by an unknown commentator of uncertain date, possibly as early as the fourth century BC, whose views are preserved on the Hibeh Musical Papyrus: Barker (1984, 183–185).

15 This is further supported by the practice of rhythmic recitation without melody (*parakatalogē*), as in the iambic trimeters of tragedy. The attribution by Pseudo-Plutarch of its invention to Archilochus (*De mus.* 1135c) suggests that it was assumed to be a longstanding practice.

16 Probert (2003, 2) argues for the use of these terms rather than the more traditional "long" and "short" to avoid confusion with long and short vowel lengths; however, as ancient metricians use terms traditionally translated "long" and "short," some inconsistency is unavoidable.

17 Especially by the Delphic oracle; cf. the oracular statement made by Neoptolemus in dactylic hexameters at a crucial juncture in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (839–842).

18 Satire presents itself, to quote Morgan (2004, 8), as epic's "evil twin." A modern parallel for the "ethical" neutrality of a familiar rhythmical system may be the rhythm of the limerick ("there was a young lady from Ryde" etc.): this could be assumed to represent an intrinsically humorous or lowbrow aesthetic, but no such effect is felt when the rhythm is attached to a plangent melody in the minor key in the final movement of Beethoven's D minor Violin Concerto.

19 The main exceptions are dochmiacs, which regularly express agitation, and ionics, which very often carry exotic overtones that may be related to the drumbeat of Asian dance; Dale (1969, 254–257).

20 Those who argue for a melodic dimension to Latin poetry (e.g. Lyons 2010) reject the supposition that the use of *cano*, *carmen*, etc. by Latin poets (e.g. at Virg. *Aen.* 1.1, Hor. 3.30.13) is purely figurative; but even if this contention is accepted, *canere* might be used for rhythmical expression alone (just as modern rap musicians "sing" without melody).

21 Pl. *Rep* 399c7–e3. The modulations employed by the New Musicians were felt to corrupt even lyre-playing, as indicated by a lively passage from the comedy *Muses* by Pherecrates: see D'Angour (2006a, 269).

22 A parallel may be drawn with aesthetic criteria for judging Classical visual art, which emphasized illusionistic sensation and naive representationalism: D'Angour (2011, 151–153).

23 Ar. *Ran*. 1314, 1348; D'Angour (2006a, 277). West (1992, 201) states that "no increase in duration … is implied or indeed admissible in these cases," but the repetition of the diphthong *hei-* (up to seven times in one manuscript) is likely to have lengthened the syllable beyond its normal quantity.

24 Pi. fr. 70b. 1-8, with reconstructions as proposed in D'Angour (1997); cf. Furley and Bremer (2001, 141–143).

CHAPTER 13
Dance and Aesthetic Perception

Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi

Taxonomies and Canons

"Dance is not an art" (Badiou 2005, 69–70). This is a relatively recent and perhaps provocative version of an old controversy. Whether or not dance should be considered one of the Fine Arts has prompted considerable dissent in modern history. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries several attempts to delimit the value of some of the arts intersected with issues pertinent to the definition of the *aesthetic*, a recent term that was gradually being established in European thought (see Introduction in this volume). Since then, both the status and the aesthetic identity of dance have been either explicitly or implicitly in dispute. For instance, in his influential yet controversial study on the Fine Arts, published in 1746, Charles Batteux included dance in his proposed system of the arts, along with poetry, music, painting, and sculpture (Batteux 1989, 82). Yet, in 1751, in his *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot*, D'Alembert passed over dance in silence, despite the fact that he discussed the other arts in their relation to the senses and to beauty (Sparshott 1983, 98–100). In the following centuries debates in the area of aesthetics usually focused on painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry, leaving dance outside the nucleus of the Fine Arts more often than not (Kristeller 1951, 497).

Taxonomical endeavors may occasionally succeed in illuminating several obscure aspects of the matter under classification but they also reveal much broader ideological forces. There is a consensus today that over this period the debate about the alleged fineness of some of the arts as opposed to others touched on broader concerns relevant to mechanisms of social consumption. In other words, allowing or denying entrance of an artistic practice into the cluster of Fine Arts was correlated with questions of status pertinent to the entire network of production, circulation, and reception of art (Bourdieu 1987).

There is no evidence that ancient authors of the Archaic and Classical periods felt the need for an identical nexus of taxonomical desiderata, though mechanisms for privileging and clustering some types of cultural production versus others were clearly active even then, especially through the institution of civic festivals. The approval, juxtaposition, and coordination of certain types of musical forms (some of which had a pronounced dance component) in the Athenian festivals, for instance, was probably based on a number of

ideological assumptions that in effect operated as a filter for both taxonomy and canonization. Such practices must have contributed to prevalent aesthetic sensibilities and must have also affected conceptualizations relevant to artistic production as a whole.

Not accidentally, the most influential ancient definition of dance (in modern times at least) is encountered in the first chapter of Aristotle's *Poetics*, in the midst of a programmatic discussion about the mimetic core of a wide range of artistic practices, the majority of which are precisely the ones performed on the Athenian stage (*Poet.* 1447a13–28, Rotstein 2012). Mentioned here are epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, dithyramb, the arts of pipe and cithara playing as well as painting and the art of the dancers. Dance makes its appearance, then, in the context of what turns out to be the most systematic ancient list of arts formed on the basis of an explicitly stated conceptual criterion, namely mimesis. It is important to note, however, that an assumed commonality between dance and other arts is implicitly present in several other comparisons among arts throughout antiquity. Libanius, for example, a late-antique author, to whose treatise *On Behalf of the Dancers* we will return several times, claims that when it comes to portrayals of the gods, "even the top sculptor would yield the first places to dancers in a judgment of beauty" (64.116; tr. Molloy 1996, 174). Similarly, in his treatise *On the Dance* Lucian (second century AD) holds that dance is capable of representing the fine sense of rhythm that is inherent in both painting and sculpture, so that "neither Phidias nor Apelles seem by any means superior to it" (*Salt.* 35). And in Plutarch's *Table Talk* one encounters a critique of the famous statement attributed to the poet Simonides regarding the close affinities between poetry and painting (poetry being defined as vocal painting and painting as silent poetry). Instead, it is suggested that dance (*orchēsis*) take the position of painting, "for there seems to be nothing of painting in poetry or of poetry in painting, nor does either art make any use whatsoever of the other, whereas dancing and poetry are fully associated and the one involves the other" (*Table Talk* 748a; tr. Sandbach 1927, 295).

None of these instances equals the early modern anxieties about the canonization of Fine Arts, with dance entering or exiting the canon according to shifting criteria. Yet they indicate a vivid interest in antiquity in bringing together and contrasting artistic practices, including dance, and seem to echo richer yet unpreserved discourses concerning these issues. Sophisticated glimpses of such approaches can be encountered within poetry as well. A famous simile in the *Iliad* that will be discussed later in this chapter, where the circular rapidity of the dancing chorus of girls and boys is likened to the wheel a potter tests to see whether it runs, is a brilliant instance, especially if one takes into account that in the broader context of this passage there is a congruence of no fewer than four artistic domains intersecting with one another on various levels: metallurgy, architecture, dance, and pottery (*Il.* 18.

590–606).

The fair frequency with which dance is mentioned in extant ancient texts should be attributed, to a large extent, to its having been indeed central to public institutions, such as civic festivals, especially in the Archaic and Classical period. In Classical Athens, for instance, tragedy, comedy, satyr play, and the dithyramb, major musical genres participating in the annual Dionysia, had a pronounced dance component, for which ancient sources give us the names *emmeleia*, *kordax*, *sikinnis*, and *tyrbasia* respectively (e.g. Ath. 20e; Poll. 4.99; Poll. 4.105). *Pyrrhichē*, a genre largely associated with a symbolic enactment of warlike gestures and postures, was included in the other major Athenian festival, the Panathenaia (Spaltro 2011, 24–63). Privileging these musical genres along with their kinetic component in the public domain of Athens could only have the effect of demoting other genres, about the performance of which we learn from other sources. The *partheneia*, for instance, traditionally involving the dance and song of young unmarried women, though apparently not represented on the central Athenian stage, seem to have enjoyed a strong public presence in cities such as Sparta and Thebes (Calame 1997, 2–18, 142–206; Kurke 2007).

With the exception of the *pyrrhichē*, about which the available evidence does not usually indicate vocal accompaniment (especially in Athens), our evidence about other choral dancing affirms that voice and movement were closely intertwined and distributed in various ways among the chorus members. Although there is abundant literary and iconographical evidence in the Archaic and the Classical periods about performances of solo and duet dancing, such dance formations seem to have been principally associated with smaller-scale venues, especially banquets and symposia (e.g. Hdt. 6.129; Xen. *Symp.* 2.14–23, 9.3–7). It is mainly after the first century BC that large audiences in theaters started watching a remarkably skilled solo dancer perform silently. Yet even in these cases, silent solo movement was accompanied by the song of a (non-dancing) chorus.

The intertwining of vocal and kinetic activity in dance practices (especially those performed in public) operated as a significant factor in the shaping of aesthetic sensibilities relevant to dance movement. The most obvious, but perhaps least revealing, signs of this fact can be traced in attempts at generic categorizations of dance that are usually encountered in post-Classical authors. A typical instance of such categorizations is a passage in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai* (631d), where dances are divided into two major types, the noble and the vulgar ones (*spoudaiai* and *phaulai orchēseis*). *Emmeleia*, the dance largely associated with tragedy, and *kordax*, the dance claimed to be distinctive of comedy, are classified under the first and the second type respectively. This sounds like a reproduction, direct or mediated, of Aristotle's discussion about the noble and vulgar origins of poetic genres that eventually led to his dichotomy between tragic and comic *ethos* (*Poet.*

1448b24–1449a6). If so, it indicates that a conceptual apparatus, applied to dance but originating from the verbal arts, was in circulation in post-Classical antiquity.

But what were the aesthetic standards for the kinetic representation of high and low *ēthē*? Another passage in the same book of Athenaeus' work mentions several suggested etymologies for *sikinnis*, the dance of the satyr play, among which are derivation from the verb *seiesthai* (to be shaken) or from an anagram of the noun *kinesis* (movement). The dance of the satyr play was typically fast (*tachutatē*), Athenaeus adds, and concludes, "*sikinnis* does not have *pathos* [emotion] therefore it never slows down" (630b-c). It is clear that Athenaeus, who at the end of the second century AD would probably have a poor grasp of actual satyr-plays, is compiling earlier discourses engaging with dance categorizations, where swiftness was probably associated with a lower type of bodily movement lacking dignity. Even if we replace the term *pathos* with *ethos*, as has been suggested, we will still be in the dark as to what exactly Athenaeus was echoing and its possible significance for an aesthetics of dance. What were the diverse aesthetic modalities inherent in these or other genres of bodily movement and shared between performers and audience? Though generally useful, such evidence, scattered and often unassimilated in post-Classical texts, does not provide us with revealing clues concerning the aesthetics of dance in antiquity.

Outlining an Aesthetics of Dance

How are we, then, to detect an aesthetics of dance? Even in recent scholarship there has been a tendency to question the possibility of such an aesthetics. This hesitancy is usually presented as collateral with the broader difficulties of a potential philosophy of dance in general. "[H]owever many beautiful dances we have, there can be no philosophy of dance, because their significances remain indefeasibly miscellaneous. Only their beauty unites them. Beauty justifies dances, dancers, dancing, and the dance, but little can be said about it" (Sparshott 1983 , 97).

Indeed, if an aesthetics of dance is thought to demand a strictly designated "philosophy of dance," that is to say a systematic investigation of the theoretical premises of dance as an art, we are unlikely to encounter such a methodologically consistent approach to dance anywhere, let alone in antiquity. But in fact, neither aesthetics as a whole, nor an aesthetics of dance in particular, need be confined within the limits of a purely philosophical method, even though they may occasionally benefit from interaction with it.

So what is an aesthetics of dance? Certainly the answer depends on one's understanding of the *aesthetic* as a whole, which I should like to define as the body of discourses generated in a given culture concerning the perception, the judgment, and the impact of the beautiful and kindred concepts. Precisely

because beauty forms a fundamental yet often elusive and thus debatable cultural notion, the *aesthetic* designates and encompasses diverse, often unsettling, modes of reflecting upon the conceptualization of the beautiful. Thus understood, the *aesthetic* is indeed a variable but dynamic factor within the culture of different historical periods, even though the word itself is a relatively recent coinage. Moreover, it is operative over the widest range of cultural manifestations and not exclusively in the realm of art. Yet it is indeed within the shifting and often blurred boundaries of the creative practices usually designated as *arts* that one finds intense deliberations regarding the perception, judgment, and impact of the beautiful. Because such deliberations are by and large intertwined with views on cognitive and moral values, the *aesthetic* is most often found in the midst of explicit or implicit tensions concerning its standing vis-à-vis these neighboring channels of evaluation. Therefore, aesthetic autonomy should not be considered a prerequisite for the existence of the aesthetic, though it may emerge as a desideratum prompted by particular ideological strains.

Consequently, by *aesthetics of dance* in a given culture we can understand the diverse discourses engaging with the conceptualization of beauty in rhythmically patterned human movement. Since beauty tends to be a contested and mobile notion, the aesthetics of dance often involves a struggle to identify and elucidate the beautiful as such, even in cases where the phraseology employed does not refer explicitly to "beauty" and its cognates.

Once the premises are clarified in this way, we can indeed trace a quite substantial aesthetics of dance in the Greek and Greco-Roman world thanks largely to the pervasiveness of the notion and practice of *spectatorship* throughout antiquity. The key role of spectatorship in the formation of aesthetic modalities has to be stressed in the case of dance, especially because approaches to Greek dance as ritual, by focusing on issues of active participation rather than of attentive watching, may overlook this essential aspect of Greek culture (Lonsdale 1993). While it is true that a large portion of performances involving dance were indeed an essential part of participatory civic rituals in various Greek cultures, a considerable number of these rituals took place in front of a larger body of citizens whose presence and delight are explicitly noted.

Precisely because spectatorship looms so large in Greek cultures, we are presented with remarkable ancient discourses about modalities of viewing the dance, containing varied levels and modes of articulation. Implicitly or explicitly, all of these discourses elaborate on notions of beauty and its impact. Among numerous references to ritual choral performances and their audiences in earlier Greek literature, three will suffice: the explicit reference to a large group of spectators watching the dance and taking pleasure in it in *Iliad* 18.603–604; the reference to the entire body of Spartan citizens in the second *partheneion* by Alcman, while the chorus leader performs her

spectacular dance (*PMGF* 3); and the praise of the chorus of the Delian maidens in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, which emphasizes the chorus's exceptional skill in building strong bonds between themselves as performers and their audiences (161–164; Peponi 2009).

With respect to the role of spectatorship in post-Classical, professional dance performances, to which we will now turn, a most revealing passage comes in Libanius' oration *On Behalf of the Dancers*:

> We, Aristides, who have wives and raise children and manage our own affairs as well as those of our community, go to the theater for the sake of relaxation and sit there meditating [*skopountes*] upon the beauty [*kallos*] that is inherent in what is shown. And if some pleasure [*terpsis*] from the dance passes into our soul by way of our eyes, we exit the theater having become more jovial and we engage afresh with the laborious tasks of decision making, proactive thinking, public speech and action. Then, when pressured by all these, we return to the same pleasure [*terpsis*], examining [*exetazontes*] the position of the feet, the movement of the hands, the fine harmony of those gestures that you revile, in general the elegance [*euschēmosunē*] of the whole. (64.57)

The passage comprises several key elements representative of an aesthetic discourse on dance. Not only does the speaker state twice the distinct pleasure that a viewer takes in looking at the beauty (*kallos*) of the dance, but he also associates this pleasure with a self-aware and attentive mode of watching. *Skopein*, the verb translated here as *meditating upon*, comes with the connotation of deliberation on an often visual stimulus, and is quite similar to the semantic range of the verb *exetazein*, used in conjunction with the viewer's observant beholding of the dance. In turn, the beauty (*kallos*) of the dance is explicitly stated, the first time in its wholeness, then itemized in the beholding of the movements of the dancer's feet and hands as well as his gestures. The speaker concludes the passage circularly, with an emphasis on the overall elegance of the spectacle, its *euschēmosunē*, a term that, in this context, can also be translated as *shapeliness* and easily traced back to renowned aesthetic discussions of the Classical era (e.g. Pl. *Resp.* 400c–401a).

The aesthetic sensibilities both of this key passage and of the entire oration, the full title of which is *Reply to Aristides on Behalf of the Dancers*, are not necessarily revealing of the author's personal temperament. Though Libanius himself, a sophist from Antioch who was well traveled and well educated in the Greek tradition, might not have been too keen on theaters and spectacles, his pointed defense of dance probably represents extant aesthetic ideas from which an intellectual figure like him could draw in order to assemble a persuasive argument. In fact, the oration is composed as a rebuttal to a speech, now lost, by Aelius Aristides against pantomime dancing, the most popular dance spectacle in the Greco-Roman world. As Aelius Aristides lived two

centuries before Libanius, the latter's revival of a debate about the cultural and social value of dance seems to reflect ideological and political controversies current in his milieu as well. Thus, even if the views aired in the oration do not disclose the author's own cultural credo, they are invaluable for our exploration of ancient approaches to dance and to their inscribed aesthetic mentalities.

The quoted passage refers to the large audiences gathered in order to watch a silent solo dancer moving to the accompaniment of a non-dancing singing chorus and illustrating with his dance the stories sung by them, a mode of dance performance that, as mentioned earlier, reached its peak and became trendy in the Greco-Roman world. Although in modern times we refer to this type of performance as "pantomime" dancing, in the original Greek texts this performance was largely denoted in an unmarked way, simply as *orchēsis*, namely *dance*. This means that, for all its novelties, pantomime dancing was in fact considered an organic evolution of traits inherent in dance practices (and, for that matter, in choral performances as well) for centuries. If we pay attention to the way the ancient discourses theorize this interesting issue, it is clear that both Lucian and Libanius, our major sources on pantomime dancing, are remarkably fluent in articulating an archeology of the genre that takes us back to Archaic and Classical Greece: Hesiod's vision of the Muses' choral dance, Homer's descriptions of the dance on Scheria, and Xenophon's elaborations on Socrates' ideas about dancing are only some of the examples Libanius uses in his attempt to establish a history of dance leading to the genre performed in his days (64.12–18). Lucian's earlier attempt – in some cases identical in content though not in phraseology – to outline an archeology of dance leading to trends current in his times clearly echoes similar ideologies and their inclusive approach to a history of dance (*Salt.* 7–16).

In this respect, we should recall that pantomime dancing indeed shared with the long tradition of Greek dance its alleged quintessence: mimesis. How did this key factor, mimesis, affect modalities of viewing the dance throughout the centuries? In his passing definition of *orchēsis*, mentioned earlier in this chapter, Aristotle had carefully focused on the triple object of dance mimesis (character, emotions, actions) through the medium of rhythm, and consequently on the signified tenor of dance rather than its signifying mechanics, namely the physical and visible entity of the moving body (*Poet.* 1447a26–28). Interestingly, this is not the focus in Libanius' attempt at a definition of dance: "Come, then, do you not define the dance [*orchēsis*] as the vigorous motion of the limbs along with certain figures and rhythms?" says Libanius (64.28, tr.Molloy). One might legitimately think that, compared to Aristotle's attempt, Libanius' is conceptually wanting. Ironically, one of the elements missing here is precisely what Aristotle, in the fourth century BC, had considered the constitutive trait of the art, mimesis, an element that became utterly prominent in post-Classical pantomime dancing. Certainly,

Libanius was fully aware of the mimetic priorities of the dance of his days, about which he talks elsewhere in his treatise. Yet it is worth noting the priority given in his definition not to this *objective* of dance but rather to the physical signifier, the *intense motion of the limbs*, along with the sensory, visual, aspect of the art of dancing.

It is important, then, to return to our question about the possible ways in which mimesis might have affected modalities of viewing the dance. One can indeed argue that mimesis operated as the mere vehicle by means of which audiences were simply prompted to guess which character, emotion, or action a dancer was actually representing. If this was the case, then indeed such "[v]alues were entirely those of expression and communication" (Sparshott 1983), thus a hindrance to further aesthetic ambitions. But Libanius' definition of dance, along with its emphasis on the mere physicality of movement, alerts us that viewing might have been a much more exciting procedure, even in the case of the dance of his days that was mimetic par excellence.

In fact, although in both Lucian and Libanius the need for the dancer to successfully communicate actions, characters, and emotions is indeed explicitly and repeatedly articulated, with varying emphasis throughout the two treatises, this qualification emerges as part of a much broader set of criteria focusing on the corporeal medium itself. "We judge the day by the beauty or ugliness of the dance," Libanius says (64.88, tr. Molloy). This is not an empty phrase, for in a number of sections in his treatise we do get a glimpse into the factors that contributed to the overall sense of beauty in the dance spectacle: for instance, the optoacoustic perception of the dancer's movement through the clear rhythmic patterning that was created by his feet and additionally emphasized by the iron strip attached to the sandals (64.97); the physical beauty of the dancer's body, about which we learn quite a few details (64.103); the exquisite suppleness of the dancer's movement about which Libanius provides detailed information (64.104); the whirling and spins of the dancer ("as though they have wings"), followed by static postures – in other words the relationship between movement and arrest as well as between lightness and gravity, all this meticulously measured, we learn, as there was an effort "to come to a stop at the same time as the song" (64.118).

The Limitations of Mimesis and the Aesthetic Imaginary

To this nexus of factors, all of which are related to the aesthetic evaluation of the dance spectacle and the pleasure it provides, we should add the complexity of the process whereby a spectator was apparently supposed to decipher the plot that was conveyed mimetically through the dancer's postures and gestures. The spectator, Libanius explains, is not simply supposed to "get the idea of Athena when Athena is being shown and Poseidon when he is,"

but “to put Poseidon in the mind by way of Athena, and Athena by way of Hephaestus …” – “are not these things more suitable for sharpening the soul than any sort of riddles?” he asks. (64.113, tr. Molloy).

To appreciate the aesthetic impact of statements like this, which one would tend to associate primarily with the realm of cognition, it is important to take into account a factor that both Libanius and Lucian emphasized in their treatises: *speed*. “Mind you, the possibility of each of the actions being accurately observed has been taken away by the speed of their body repeatedly undergoing a change to whatever you like” (64.117, tr.Molloy). Thus, far from subjecting the spectators to an elementary drill of identifying plots and characters, the viewing of pantomime dancing provided a much more complex aesthetic thrill in which the constant change of bodily forms emitted a rapid flow of meanings to be grasped instantaneously before both form and meaning evaporated into a new set of signs. To that matter, the dance’s archetypal model, briefly mentioned by Libanius (64.117) but elaborated on by Lucian, is particularly illuminating:

> For it seems to me that the ancient myth about Proteus the Egyptian means nothing else than that he was a dancer [*orchēstēn*], an imitative [*mimētikon*] fellow, able to shape himself and change himself into anything, so that he could imitate [*mimeisthai*] even the liquidity of water and the sharpness of fire in the liveliness of his movement; yes, the fierceness of a lion, the rage of a leopard, the quivering of a tree, and in a word whatever he wished. Mythology, however, on taking it over, described his nature in terms more paradoxical, as if he became what he imitated. Now just that thing is characteristic of the dancers to-day, who certainly may be seen changing swiftly at the cue and imitating [*mimoumenous*] Proteus himself.
>
> (*Salt*. 19; tr. Harmon 1936 , 231–233)

Notably, Lucian makes here an attempt to capture the nature and the genealogy of the entire art of dancing, only at the end touching on the evolution of the art in his times. Mythological thought wrongly imagined Proteus as really becoming what in fact he was just imitating, Lucian says, for the truth is that Proteus was an imitative (*mimētikos*) creature par excellence and, in being such, he was the *orchēstēs* par excellence, a dancer who could shape (*schēmatizesthai*) and transform himself (*metaballesthai*) into everything he wanted to.

The passage seems to reflect an ideological tradition in favor of dancers and dancing, and it is for that reason that its underlining of the fundamental conception of dance as the art of metamorphosis is revealing. Proteus himself is here described as practicing not just a mimesis of characters or actions but the mimesis of the world and its attributes in their entirety. As a dancer, he is able to change himself into anything and everything – water, fire, lion,

leopard, the quivering of a tree. But, if the archetypal dance is a constant flux of transformations, how is the viewer supposed to respond to this flux? Interestingly, swiftness, the element briefly mentioned by Libanius, makes its appearance in Lucian's text more prominently: "they may be seen changing *swiftly* at the cue [*ōkeōs diallattomenous*]." In such cases, then, the rapidity of transformation must have operated as an aesthetic catalyst, turning the whole spectacle into a real phantasmagoria, as visible forms and hidden allusions constantly transmuted and blended in the mind of a spectator who was at the same time enchanted *and* alert in order to apprehend the show. We can see therefore that even in the case of a genre that had allegedly reached the peak of dance's mimetic potential, mimesis could operate as a manifold device stimulating to an utmost degree the audience's perceptive faculties and imagination. When at its best, this aesthetic modality engages one's entire sensory and mental apparatus.

Although this demanding (and rewarding) experience of the dance spectacle is not discussed in this part of Lucian's dialogue, spectatorship is strategically addressed early in the dialogue, where a playful exchange between the two interlocutors about dance and its viewers leads to an interesting assimilation of the dance spectator to the Sirens' listener. This analogy prompts Lycinus, the dance proponent, to downplay the spectators' passive allurement in order to stress the remarkable sharpening of their cognitive faculties, a phenomenon evocative of the famous lines in the *Odyssey* about the Sirens' song that sends a traveler on his way "having learnt more" (*kai pleiona eidōs*) (*Salt.*4). This sharpening of the viewer's cognitive faculties, stressed by Libanius as well (e.g. 64.114), is more than just a rhetorical elaboration of the literary critics' maxim about the ideal combination of delight *and* usefulness in the realm of verbal arts. The reader of the two treatises on dance encounters numerous specific references to the particular ways in which pleasure and cognition cooperate while one is viewing the dance. This likely reflects the existence of an even richer pool of pro-dance discourses over these centuries that kept in view this particular issue.

Dance mimesis, then, is far from turning the act of viewing into a facile act of comprehending. If guessing the signified was indeed part of the viewer's enthrallment, it was due to the larger phenomenon that dance offered the utter enrichment of the signifier, the ultimate elaboration on its potential. In other words, the viewer outlined in Lucian's and Libanius' analyses is not *just* looking for meaning and content; he is electrified by the constant flow of forms and by the challenges these forms pose to his grasp on meaning. Thus understood, mimesis does not strip dance of an aesthetic. Quite the opposite, it turns aesthetic apprehension into a real psychosomatic adventure.

If even in the case of the mimetic dance genre par excellence, pantomime, we should understand mimesis as a multifarious and dynamic process rather than as a merely straightforward communication of characters and plots, we might

be more open to an overall alternative aesthetics of dance as applied to earlier periods as well. Based on the available evidence we can trace at least three models of apprehending dance that either *question* or *alter* a conventional understanding of mimetic representation. The first model is entirely *non-mimetic*; the second relies on *analogy*; and the third is what I would like to call a *meta-mimetic* model.

There is a question, however, that needs to be answered. Since no treatises about dance have survived from these earlier periods, do we have any access to the ancient Greek viewer's aesthetic experience when watching the dance? Surprisingly, the answer to this question is positive. Despite big gaps in our sources, we do have at least some good evidence about certain modalities of apprehension and contemplation of dance movement in Greece. In fact, we seem to have more evidence about the way Greek dance was apprehended as a visual stimulus than about technical aspects of dance and choreography.

A brief digression can best explain this phenomenon. In his influential book *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, Michael Baxandall interprets the presence of a somewhat enigmatic but repeatedly occurring figure in some paintings of this period by comparing it to an interesting character appearing in dramatic plays:

> For instance the plays were introduced by a choric figure, the *festaiuolo*, often in the character of an angel, who remained on the stage during the action of the play as a mediator between the beholder and the events portrayed: similar choric figures, catching our eyes and pointing to the central action, are often used by the painters. They are even recommended by Alberti in his treatise on painting: "I like there to be a figure which admonishes and instructs us about what is happening in the picture …"
>
> (Baxandall 1988, 72)

When we turn to the poetry of the Archaic and the Classical periods we find that, in a similar manner, there is often an internal interpreter of kinetic action. In several cases this interpreter is none other than the chorus themselves, suggesting – not unlike Baxandall's *festaiuolo* – how the dance action should be perceived and appreciated. For anyone interested in exploring the fields of spectatorship and aesthetic experience in Greece, then, it is important to take into account these pockets of reflection on dance as we find them within Greek poetry. By articulating verbally ways in which the spectator's experience of dance could be molded, these poetic sources suggest types of aesthetic apprehension that other sources, especially philosophical discourse, tend to disguise.

Yet an interesting source for the first model of visual apprehension, the *non-mimetic* one, is Plato's last work, the *Laws*. Despite the fact that the mimetic function of choral performances (involving both vocal and kinetic activity) is largely affirmed and highlighted by the Athenian interlocutor throughout this

lengthy dialogue (e.g. 655d–656a, 815d–816a), an intriguing passage in the seventh book presents things in a more complicated way:

> Now dancing [*orchēsis*] is of two kinds: the one is of those imitating [*mimoumenōn*] the style of the Muse, preserving both freedom and nobility; the other aims at physical fitness, lightness [*elaphrotētos*], and beauty [*kallous*] by securing for the various parts and members of the body the proper degree of flexibility and extension and bestowing also the rhythmical motion which belongs to each, and which is carried over and diffused adequately into the entire dance.
>
> (*Laws* 795e; tr. R.G. Bury adapted)

Thus, according to the Athenian, the first kind of dance acquires its meaning and value through reference to its mimetic function. Yet the other kind draws its importance not from its mimetic referent but from its plain demonstration of physical virtuosity: its lightness (*elaphrotētos*) and beauty (*kallous*) – note the juxtaposition of the two in the passage. It seems, then, that lightness and velocity in dance do not need to be mimetic or representational in order to justify themselves. Does this mean that, in this case, beauty can be appreciated without reference to any social or moral value, such as those values inherent in the sense of *freedom* (*eleutheron*) and *nobility* or *grandeur* (*megaloprepes*) that are associated with the mimesis of the Muses? In what way are lightness and velocity linked to beauty? How can one explain why a flexible limb or the whole body moving in an appropriate rhythm are beautiful?

To answer such questions we need to move beyond philosophical prose and into verse. Fortunately, Greek poetry preserves instances of an embedded viewer experiencing this non-mimetic type of movement. Two examples from the eighth book of the *Odyssey* can illuminate this type of experience:

… and they smoothed the dancing floor and set right

all the ground, and the herald came bringing with him the clear lyre

for Demodokos, who moved into the middle, and about him stood forth

young men in the first of their youth, well trained in dancing,

and beat the wonderful dancing floor with their feet. Odysseus

gazed [*thēeito*] on the twinkling of their feet [*marmarugas podōn*] his heart full of

wonder [*thaumaze thumōi*].

(8.260–265; tr. R. Lattimore)

Both the youth of the performers and their excellent dancing skills are clearly stated. One could claim that both qualifications are not dissimilar to the agility

and velocity Plato discusses in the passage quoted previously. But what is added here is the response of an internal, imagined, spectator, namely Odysseus, who is described as marveling at the dance while looking at the "twinkling of the dancers' feet" (*marmarugas podōn*). As the *scholia* to this passage explain in remarkably nuanced language, *marmarugē* denotes the emission of light (*apostilpsis*) and the sort of brilliance (*lampēdōn*) that derives from intense movement (scholia BPQV in *Od*. 8.265). *Marmarugē* (gleaming or flashing) is conceptualized here as an optical impression that provides the viewer with aesthetic delight. Although this or similar terms may be associated with visual qualities also encountered in material artifacts (Kurke 2012, 228), what is important to underline in this context is the lack of mimetic associations. In these lines skillful and intense movement is marveled at for its own sake, for the pure phantasmagoria it provides while turned into an impression of light, a phenomenon to be encountered in several descriptions of dance in Greek poetry (e.g. Bacch. 17.101–105; Alcm. *PMGF* 1.50–63; Peponi 2004, 302–307).

A second passage from the *Odyssey* is indicative of this type of aesthetic perception when looking at the dance:

Then Alkinoos asked Halios and Laodamas to dance

all by themselves, since there was none to challenge them. These two,

after they had taken up in their hands the ball, a beautiful

thing, red, which Polybos the skilled craftsman had made them,

one of them, bending far back, would throw it up to the shadowy

clouds, and the other, going high off the ground, would easily

catch it again, before his feet came back to the ground.

(8.370–376; tr. R. Lattimore)

Again, this is movement perceived and apprehended in its purest form or, we should perhaps say, purely *as* form. This is how throwing a ball is turned from mere play into a spectacle, where every stage of its process is appreciated not for its functionality but primarily for its visual appeal. This is a brief and unadorned description from the point of view of a spectator, here the narrator, taking delight in simply imagining this gracious orchestic spectacle. The ball is described as an artifact crafted by Polybus for the young dancers. Leaning backward, tossing the ball towards the shadowy clouds, while the other one leaps up and catches it before his feet touch the ground again – these movements are described as visually delightful in themselves.

The second model of dance apprehension not tied to mimesis is often presented through *analogy* and largely by way of figurative language. Unlike the set of examples just discussed, the question of a potential relationship

between dance movement and an external referent is indeed addressed in these cases, yet the suggested referent does not operate as a necessary prerequisite for the viewer's apprehension but as a possible imaginary option. Representative of this approach are the famous lines, briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, from the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*, where the shield of Achilles, exquisitely crafted by Hephaestus, is described in detail. One of the scenes included in this early instance of *ekphrasis* is a dancing chorus of young girls and boys. The lengthy and remarkably complex description of this scene has prompted stimulating readings both in antiquity and in modern times, but for our purposes focusing on one of its rich aspects will suffice. Near the middle of this description the chorus is said to be "running on their skilled feet very lightly, *as when* a potter, seated, is testing his wheel well-fitted in his hands, to find whether it runs " (18.599–601). In his *Commentary on the Iliad* (vol. 4.267 van der Valk), a sensitive reader of Homer in the twelfth century, Eustathius, draws our attention to a crucial detail. He notices how carefully the poet compared the "swiftness of the circular dance" with the wheel of a potter. The wheel is not described during the actual work of the potter, Eustathius observes, but just prior to it "only as a try-out." "For the circular movement [*periphora*] of such a wheel is most intense," Eustathius adds, "while the heaviness of clay on the wheel, when actually employed, blunts the swiftness of the movement."

This analogy then – here in the form of a simile – is essentially interpretive and also evaluative. It elaborates not only on the faultlessness of the circular motion itself (the movement of the dancing chorus and the movement of the wheel) but also on their wonderful agility and lightness – the very qualities mentioned in the Platonic passage quoted earlier. In this case, though, lightness and agility are conceptualized through this remarkable vignette, the genre-scene of the working potter and his wheel. It is this vignette, with all the network of associations it evokes (including the offstage physical labor required for any exquisite artistry such as the potter's and the chorus's), that provides depth and perspective to the magnificent spectacle of the dance, while blending what is supposed to be visible with what is invisible but subject to *visualization* by the engaged imagination. Vision and visualization are indeed juxtaposed. To put it in a different way, visualization enriches, in fact aestheticizes, vision.

We might call this Greek modality of dance apprehension, which is usually embedded in poetic language, the *orchestic imaginary*. Through the *orchestic imaginary* the palpable movement that is supposed to be seen by an actual or imaginary audience is at the same time fantasized and dreamt up in slightly or radically different ways. Thus the Greek aesthetic experience of dance both prompts and is enriched by various and usually complementary modes of analogy. *This* movement, step, posture, gesture, dancer, costume, impression is *like that – that* being some other movement, impression, posture, gesture

invisible but subject to visualization. This mode of contemplating dance might indeed interfere in some cases with mimesis, but it usually does so in order to diffuse the mimetic referent or to diversify it. Far from being attached to a singular mimetic referent, the *orchestic imaginary* encourages a creative mental process, a model of active perceptiveness while a spectator contemplates dance. Its many versions are operative in a wide range of Greek texts and can embrace, as one of its subsets, the trope of *choral projection*, namely the tendency of Greek choruses (and especially of tragic ones) to verbally project their present dancing onto alternative spatiotemporal coordinates or other, usually mythical, choruses (Henrichs, 1996).

I named the third Greek modality of apprehending dance *meta-mimetic*. In these cases a referent outside the palpable dancing movement is pursued, but it is identified in two or three alternative ways *simultaneously*. Thus different objects and impressions literally intersect and overlap at the same time. Such meta-mimetic instances are few but they are particularly interesting. A Pindaric fragment identified by Plutarch as a *hyporchēma*, a song meant to accompany a certain type of dance, provides a typical example (Pindar fr.107a M):

Imitate the Pelasgian horse *or* dog

from Amyklai as you shake with your foot

in the contest and drive forward the curved song …

(Tr. W. Race)

The lines are both interesting and problematic. For our present purposes what stands out are the two alternatives given in the beginning of the surviving part of the fragment. In other words, the object of mimesis is approached from the start with an open and double possibility. The dancer, or dancers, are asked to enact either a dog *or* a horse. Interestingly, as the poem moves on, it seems to elaborate on the second possibility, the Amyclaean hound (i.e. a hound from Laconia), yet imagined in a Thessalian setting. One wonders whether the viewers of the dance were supposed to understand this blending as a deliberate rhetorical device mixing the two alternative objects of mimesis into one.

The second *partheneion* by the seventh-century Spartan poet Alcman presents a similar, remarkably plural, conceptualization of dance movement. (3 *PMGF* 64–70): “But Astymeloisa makes no answer to me; no, holding the garland, like a bright star of the shining heavens *or* a golden branch *or* soft down … she passed through with her long feet …” (tr. D. Campbell). The chorus here describes the spectacular dancing movement of Astymeloisa, most probably the chorus leader, in three alternative ways: like a star flying through the shining heavens, *or* like a golden branch, *or* like a soft feather (Peponi 2007, 361–362). What is striking here is not only the idea that the performing dancer

could – or even should – be perceived at the same time in three different ways, but also the well-formed, and perhaps well-established rhetorical device within which this multiplicity of overlapping impressions is captured and celebrated. In both Pindar and in Alcman the multiplicity of possibilities are aligned by means of punctuating disjunctives (*or*, *or*).

Obviously, these disjunctions challenge any kind of singularity in the perception of the viewer. They momentarily question pre-established associations between movement and mimesis. Thus, for an instant at least, they make the process of understanding dance more demanding and intriguing. Unlike any process of straightforward understanding, these instances transform comprehension from an act of simple recognition into a moment of complex contemplation. They do not just describe verbally the dance mimesis that is supposedly taking place corporeally. On the contrary, they use language in order to briefly reflect on the multiple possibilities of the dancing act. They meditate on the richness of a mimetic potential. One of the most significant questions that these meta-mimetic moments of contemplation pose concerns the very nature of the actions of looking at, appreciating, and reflecting upon dance.

It is in the inner psychic and intellectual domain of such complex processes that the aesthetic perception of dance took place in the Greek and Greco-Roman worlds. To return to Badiou's provocative statement with which we began: later in the same essay he explains that "Dance is not an art, because it is the sign of the possibility of art as inscribed in the body" (Badiou 2005, 69). Discourses about dance in antiquity, both in poetry and in prose, certainly elaborated on the infinite possibilities inscribed on the dancer's body, indicating in this way that if dance is an art, it is so because it has the power to sink into and stir up the viewer's imaginary.

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FURTHER READING

Aesthetic approaches to ancient dance are still limited. For an overview of theoretical problems relevant to dance, see the excellent collective volume edited by Copeland and Cohen (1983), which includes, among other contributions, pieces by influential theoreticians of dance such as Susanne Langer, Francis Sparshott, André Levinson, and David Levin.

For an overview of Greek dance and of theoretical issues attached to it (but without a focus on questions relevant to aesthetics) Naerebout's book (1997) is a very helpful tool, as it also provides a detailed thematic bibliography (including the numerous published pieces by Lillian Lawler, a pioneer in the study of Greek dance) and glossary of ancient dance vocabulary.

The last decade has seen an explosion of excellent work on pantomime dancing. Garelli's book (2007) provides an extensive and very useful overview of the genre. Lada-Richards (2007) and Webb (2008) offer fine and complementary approaches, principally focusing on the social status of the genre and the ideological and political debates around it in late antiquity. The volume edited by Hall and Wyles (2008) further illuminates several aspects of pantomime dancing and its performance.

For Greek dance in its ritual context, see the pioneering work by Calame (1997; French original 1977), which focuses especially on women's choruses. Lonsdale's work (1993) is a remarkable contribution to this area, as is Kowalzig's more recent book (2007). Two excellent volumes on the ritual dance in armor (*pyrrhiche*) are by Ceccarelli (1998) and Spaltro (2011).

The collective volume on Plato's *Laws* (Peponi 2013) includes several papers that engage with the exceptionally prominent position of choral dance in this work and raise issues relevant to both the politics and the aesthetics of dance in Greece. Finally, Macintosh's edited volume (2010) is an excellent guide to the many facets of the reception of ancient dance in modern times, a topic also covered by Billings, Budelmann, and Macintosh (2013), whose volume focuses on the chorus in ancient and modern times.

CHAPTER 14
Greek Painting and the Challenge of *Mimēsis*

Hariclia Brecoulaki

> A pigeon had grown very thirsty, so she flew from place to place looking for some water to drink. She saw a water jar painted on a wall and thought that it was actually full of water, so she flew right into the wall in order to take a drink.
>
> Aesop, *Fables* 431, *The Pigeon and the Painting*

Introduction: The School of Sicyon, *Chrēstographia*, and "undecaying beauty"

The city of Sicyon, known for centuries for her famous school of arts (Strabo VIII, 6, 23; Plut. *Arat.* 12), auctioned her public painting collection to pay debts to Rome sometime in the second half of the first century BC (Cic. *Ad Att*. I, 19.9; 20.4). The paintings were acquired by the Roman aedile Aemilius Scaurus in 58 BC and exhibited at the wooden theater in the Campus Martius (Pliny, *NH* 35.127). Numerous wooden panels were seized as war booty from Greek cities or purchased to decorate public and private buildings in Rome (Raoul Rochette 1836; Carey 2004; Rouveret 2007a). However, the paintings created by the Sicyonian masters seem to have been the most prized ones. The orator Hortensius paid 114,000 sesterces to buy the Argonauts of Cydias and made a shrine for its display at his villa at Tusculum (Pliny, *NH* 35.130). Augustus paid the city of Cos a hundred talents to carry Apelles' legendary Anadyomene off to Rome, where it was dedicated in the Shrine of his father Caesar (Pliny, *NH* 35.91). Following the conquest of Egypt, he transferred many of Apelles' paintings, together with the wooden panels that originally decorated Alexander's funerary cart (Diod. Sic. 18, 26–28), in order to embellish the most frequented parts of his forum (Pliny, *NH* 35.94).

Apelles, the painter par excellence of the Sicyonian school, was appointed court painter by Philip II and his son Alexander (Pliny, *NH* 35.93), with whom he was in high favor (Moreno 2001). Apelles was probably the only painter to be allowed to reproduce Alexander's image (Horace, *Ep.* II, 1, 239; Pliny *NH* 7.125; Apuleius *Florid.* 117). But what was so unique about Apelles' portraits that Alexander thought they would be a glory both to the artist and himself (Cic. *Ep. ad fam*. V, 12, 229)? Probably the reason lay in the fact that the portraits went beyond the mere reproduction of a remarkable

physical likeness, a legendary characteristic of many of Apelles' paintings (Pliny, *NH* 35.89, 95). Various ancient authors speak with high praise of his skills and his intellectual qualities: an extreme precision of lines and a certain "truth" in their drawing (Pliny, *NH*, 35.81–83; Dio Chrys. *De Invidia* II, 421; Herondas, *Mim*. 4, v. 73–73); an admirable sense of proportion (Pliny, *NH* 35.107); a delicate use of color in subdued hues (*colores austeri*, Pliny, *NH* 35.50); technical innovations (*atramentum*; Pliny, *NH* 35.97); modesty (Propert. 1, ii, 21–22); intellectual brilliance (Diog. Laert. I, 38). But what distinguished his own paintings and gave him supremacy among painters was the "graceful charm," the *charis* his figures emanated (Pliny, *NH* 35. 79–80; Quintil. *Inst. Orat*. XII, 10, 6; Ael. *VH* 12.41; Plut. *Demetr*. 22.6). Pliny holds that this painter almost certainly contributed more to painting than all other artists put together. He was also a theorist and had published books on the principles of painting (Pliny, *NH* 35.79).

The eulogy of the worshiper Kyno to the paintings of Apelles at the temple of Asclepius at Cos lays stress on the realism the painter's figures emanated and on the almost "true" appearance of the flesh, "so warm and throbbing with life," and calls Apelles' hands "truthful" in terms of the accuracy of his lines (Herondas, *Mim*. 4; Zanker 2006; Gutzwiller 2009). A similar comment is made by Pliny with regard to Apelles' nude hero who challenged Nature herself (*natura ipsam provocavit*; Pliny *NH* 35.94–95). Pliny further recalls that Apelles made his pictures resemble the persons represented in such an exact fashion that the physiognomists were able to form a judgment as readily from his portraits as they would have been had they seen the originals (Pliny, *NH* 35.88). The portrait of Alexander holding a thunderbolt was finished with so much skill and dexterity that it used to be said that there were two Alexanders: one invincible, the son of Philip, the other inimitable, the production of Apelles (Plut. *De fort. Magni Alexandri* II. 2). In Apelles' uniquely lifelike portraits, as Jaś Elsner points out, "representation effectively transcends the limits of art" (Elsner 2007).

Let us now return to the school of Sicyon and its tradition of panel painting. According to Plutarch, when Apelles came to Sicyon and paid a talent to be admitted into the society of its artists, he was already a renowned painter, but he desired "to share their fame rather than their art" (Plutarch, *Aratus* 13). In the same passage Plutarch further reports that "the fame of Sicyon's beautiful and refined paintings was still in full bloom, and they alone were considered the possessors of an undecaying beauty" (*ēnthei gar eti doxa tēs Sikūōnias mousēs kai chrēstographias ōs monēs adiaphtoron echousēs to kalon*). The word *chrēstographia* is not easy to translate into English, for it evokes a more profound and complex meaning than merely "beautiful" or "refined." It also encompassed the notion of "morally good," as in the noun *kalokagathia* in which both the notions of beauty and virtue are combined (see Aristotle on the requirement of tragedy that its characters be morally good "*chrēsta*," in order

for the true tragic effect to be achieved; *Poet*. 54a19–22; Manieri 1995; Zanker 2000). In my opinion, *chrēstographia* is a key word for our understanding of the Sicyonian school's fame, and its significance has to do with the philosophical and aesthetic question of "how to represent" and "what is worthy of being represented" in figural painting, as originally defined through the highly influential, yet different, views on mimesis of Plato and Aristotle (Halliwell 2001, 2002, 2005).

Physical Resemblance and the Limits of the Visible and the Invisible

In Pliny's accounts of the development of painting – taken most often from earlier sources, mainly Antigonos of Carystos and Xenocrates of Athens – the quality of a work seems to be systematically judged on the criterion of greatest possible likeness to Nature (*similitudo*; Isager 1991 ; Naas 2004). Despite the fact that reproducing Nature could occasionally be the result of an accident – as we know from Pliny's stories about the realistic effects achieved by hurling a sponge filled with paints onto a picture (on Apelles: Dio Chrys. *Orat*. 63.4; on Protogenes and Neacles: Pliny *NH* 35.102–103 and 35.104) – the prerequisite of truthfulness and accuracy seems to have dominated painters' artistic objectives and motivated their technical innovations, sometimes even leading to exaggerations. Seneca's tale (*Contr*. 10.5, 3–5) about Parrhasios torturing an Olynthian slave to death in order to use his painful expressions as a model for his Prometheus, may indeed reflect a certain obsession with lifelikeness, which impelled the artist to behave with such sadism (Rouveret 2003). Fulvius Sparsus, criticizing Parrhasios, says that he "was *making* a Prometheus, not painting one" and wonders what would have happened if the said artist had decided to paint a war (*Contr*. 10.5.3). Even for Pliny, excessive diligence and the drive for perfection could indeed become a source of "evil effects", and an artist should know when to take his hand away from a picture (Pliny, *NH* 35.80; 35.41–52). Verisimilitude, achieved through *diligentia*, although extremely valued, was not the sole criterion for artistic greatness, and qualities like *gratia* and *pulchritudo* were also considered important in the evaluation of an artwork (Daneu Lattanzi 1982; Elsner and Sharrock 1991; Perry 2000).

In one of the many tales of competition between painters, the one recounted by Pliny about the victory of Parrhasios' veil over Zeuxis' grapes is probably the most famous and often cited (Pliny, *NH* 35.65). Zeuxis had painted the grapes so realistically that the birds flew to the stage on which the picture was hanging. Parrhasios tricked his colleague's eye by painting the lifelike image of a curtain on a wall. Parrhasios won, and Zeuxis admitted he had deceived birds, but Parrhasios had deceived him, a painter. In Lacan's analysis of this anecdote, while the eyes of the birds are attracted by the visual illusion of the object, the eye of the painter is irritated by the veil and fooled by the

symptomatic desire to get beyond the image itself. Illusionism reproduces "perceptual depth" only insofar as it "fools the eye" by letting it "perceive" in a "triumph of the eye over the gaze." According to Lacan, "if one wishes to deceive a man, what one presents to him is the painting of a veil, that is to say, something that incites him to ask what is behind it" (Lacan 2000, 538). Further in the same passage, Pliny says that Zeuxis subsequently painted a Child Carrying Grapes, and when birds flew down to settle on them, he was vexed with his own work, and came forward saying, with like frankness, "I have painted the grapes better than the boy, for had I been perfectly successful with the latter, the birds must have been afraid" (tr. Jex-Blake and Sellers 1896).

In contrast to the popularity that the Plinian version of the anecdote gained over the centuries, Seneca the Elder's version, recounted a century earlier (*Contr.* 10, 5, 27), did not attract particular scholarly attention:

> Zeuxis painted a boy holding a bunch of grapes, and because the bunch was so realistic that it even made birds fly up to the picture, one of the spectators said the birds thought ill of the picture: they would not have flown up if the boy had been a good likeness. They say Zeuxis erased the grapes and kept what was best in the picture not what was most like.
>
> (tr. Winterbottom 1974)[1]

The comparison of the two stories, however, is of particular interest, for it allows us to perceive a very different appreciation of Zeuxis' own work, vis-à-vis mimetic effects and the value of truthfulness in Classical painting. In Pliny's version, Zeuxis is deceived by not having sufficiently "fooled" the eye of the birds, who although attracted by the grapes, were not afraid of his insufficiently realistic boy. In Seneca's version, however, Zeuxis decides to erase the grapes and keep what is "best" in the picture (*melius*), not what is most "resemblant" (*similius*). Although the exact meaning of the adjective *melius* in this context remains rather vague, the viewer was probably unable to appreciate what lay "behind" the physical resemblance of Zeuxis' figure. In other words, he perceived the painting through the "eye" only, but not through the "gaze." For Zeuxis, in Seneca's anecdote, the fundamental function of his art seems to have little to do with the realistic imitation of the visual appearance of the world for the pleasure of the human eye (Klimis 2003). If Zeuxis had deluded the birds, as Apelles later deceived quadrupeds (Pliny, *NH* 35.95), the viewer did not see in his *boy* what the painter sought to show. But why would Zeuxis bother to depict his human figure *melius* instead of using the same "illusionistic" technique as he did with his birds? I think the background of such an aesthetic prerequisite may be found in Aristotle's *Poetics*, where the philosopher argues that for "poetic effect a convincing impossibility is preferable to that which is unconvincing though possible," and adds that "It may be impossible that there should be such people as

Zeuxis used to paint, but it would be better if there were; for the type should improve on the actual" (*toioutous einai oion Zeuxis egraphen, alla beltion; to gar paradeigma dei hyperechein*; Arist. *Po.* 1461b9). The *melius* in Seneca's story sounds like an echo of the *beltion*, the "improved appearance" of Zeuxis' figures in the Aristotelian treatise. In both cases, we are probably dealing with forms of idealization that lie beyond actual appearance. Zeuxis' famous Helen was after all the product of a composite of the best features of five different young women (Pliny, *NH* 35.64; 1xi–ii; Siebert 2009). Zeuxis' reaction of erasing the most illusionistic appearance from his painting falls within the general problematic of the representational scope of pictorial art and of whether its profit may be something more than a purely visual field.

Both Plato and Aristotle refer to figurative art partly because of its prominence in their surrounding culture, and especially in Athens. But debates on representational mimesis were already under way a century earlier than Plato's thinking about mimesis evolved, when the first recorded generation of great masters, such as Polygnotos, was already attempting the truthful reproduction of Nature (Halliwell 2002, 120–124). In the earliest non-Platonic text to discuss the representational capability of painting, Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Socrates' questions to the painter Parrhasios focus on whether visual mimesis can be enriched with an evaluative dimension, can represent the non-sensory, and can perceive and depict character (*ēthos*) through physical expression. Although it is a commonly held belief that Plato limits visual mimesis to the mirroring of visible reality, based on his famous treatment of painting in the first part of *Republic* 10, in a passage in the *Cratylus* (422e4) he actually acknowledges that the relationship between a painted image and its model is not confined to the mere reproduction of the actual world (Goldschmidt 1986; Halliwell 2000, 2005). In *Republic* 3.401a–d Plato develops his ideals regarding the education of the young based on the notions of beauty and grace, qualities, he claims, that should be found in painting and all similar craftsmanship. Plato encourages one to search for those craftsmen who are capable of following the "trail of true beauty and grace" and to ban from the Republic the "other craftsmen" that represent the "licentious, illiberal and graceless." According to Xenophon's dialogue, painting is capable of showing character through the figures depicted. In *Republic* 3 mimesis is engaged in making moral sense of the human, through the conciliation of art with beauty and truth. Art should aspire to be *kalon* in the fullest sense of the word, the idea of beauty including moral and spiritual as well as physical beauty (Janaway 1995; Destrée 2012).

Some centuries later, Aelian (*Hist. Misc*. 4.4) recalls a story that had attracted his attention to a law of the Thebans: "I hear that in Thebes a law was in force which instructed artists – both painters and sculptors – to make their portraits better than the original. As punishment for those who produced a sculpture or painting less attractive than the original the law threatened a fine of a

thousand drachmae." In the Loeb edition "*es to kreitton tas eikonas mimeisthe*" is translated "make their portraits flattering" (tr. Wilson 1997). In the context of Classical painting and aesthetics, however, as suggested above, to make a portrait *es to kreitton* does not necessarily mean to flatter the individual represented, as was clearly the case with the latter-day "professional flatterers" who embellished the portraits of individuals in order to satisfy their personal vanity. In Lucian's discussions of the differences between flattery and praise and the problems of eulogistic discourse in an imperial context, the author uses the eloquent example of portrait painters to condemn people fond of being flattered and fooled in their images (*Pro Imag.* 6*)*: "What these people look for in a painter is readiness to improve nature." Further on, referring to the proper formulae of panegyric, Polystratos concludes that the flatterer praises for selfish ends and cares little about truth, whereas the panegyrist's success depends on the "goodness" of his illustrations (*Pro Imag.* 19). He claims that "this goodness is shown not when the illustration is just like the thing illustrated, nor yet when it is inferior, but when it is as high above it as may be." In Lucian's account the panegyrist takes the virtues his subjects really do possess and makes the most of them. In praising a dog, for example, a skillful panegyrist should be able to liken "the dog's size and spirit to the lion's" (tr. Fowler 1905). Aristotle in his *Poetics* (1448a1–6) already refers to the possibilities poetry offers for representing men "better," or "worse," or "much what they are," just like in painting: Polygnotus depicted men as better (*kreittous*) that they are and Pauson worse (*cheirous*), while Dionysious made them just like they are (*omoious eikazein*). In his *Politics* (1340a36–38), he recommends young men not to contemplate the works of Pauson, but those of Polygnotos and of any other moral painter or sculptor (*estin ēthikos*). Although G. Zanker believes that Aristotle is alluding to social class at *Poetics* 1448a1–6 (Zanker 2000), I think the reference actually has to do with moral status, as is more commonly believed (Reinach 1921; Rouveret 1989; Manieri 1995) – even if there is probably a certain association between social class and moral status anyway – and that the possibility of painters depicting men as "better" or "worse" also relied on their personal skill. It is interesting to note that while Polygnotos is considered a master painter (for all relevant accounts of Polygnotos see Reinach 1921, 86–152), Aristophanes alludes to a painter Pauson using the adjective "scurvy knave" (*Arch.* 854; tr. Rogers 1986) and, according to the scholia of *Archanians*, Pauson was a "perfectly wicked caricaturist" (for negative judgments on Pauson's character and the mediocre quality of his art, see Reinach 1921, 174–175). As far as Dionysius is concerned, according to Plutarch, although his paintings are full of strength and vigor they "seem forced and labored" (*Timol*. 36.2).

Discussing the end of virtue in his *Magna Moralia* (I, 1.19–20), Aristotle maintains that a painter might be a good imitator (*agathos mimētēs*) and yet not be praised, if he does not make it his aim to imitate what is best in his

subjects (*ta kallista mimeisthai*). In his *Poetics* (1454b8–11), he advises poets to "ennoble" the defects of character of their subjects while preserving the type, following the example of the good portrait painters, who reproduced the distinctive form of the original, while also creating a likeness which was true to life and yet more beautiful (*omoious poiountes, kallious graphousin*). The question of "idealization" is posed in terms of both physical verisimilitude and *ethical* understanding of reality, and the representational capabilities of the painters are challenged in both the reproduction of the visible *kalos* and of the invisible *ēthos*. Polygnotos, the *agathos ēthographos*, seems to have transcended the sensory domain and delineated character, evoking *ēthos* in terms of moral excellence (Rouveret 1989; Brecoulaki forthcoming). Zeuxis, although devoid of "ethical quality" (*… ē de Zeuxidos graphē ouden echei ēthos;* Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450a26–28), depicted his figures as more "beautiful", aspiring to an idealized form of "beauty" (Arist. *Poetics* 1461b9). It is possible that the famous painters of the Sicyonian school, having assimilated the technical achievements of their predecessors and acquired a theoretical/philosophical background to the problems of representational *mimēsis*, achieved the merging of both qualities in their paintings: a remarkable likeness on the one hand, as attested in the numerous textual sources; a significant insight into a person's noble signs of character (*sēmeia*; Aristotle *De interp.* 1.16a3–8) on the other, as the term *chrēstographia*, in my opinion, suggests. The *chrēstographia* of the Sicyonian school would in fact have reflected objectives of mimesis conditioned by moral aspects and artistic goals, rather than material/professional motivations, thus producing "unprofitable imitations of art" (*mataiotechnies*; Quintilian, *Inst. Orat*. II, 20.3).

The "undecaying beauty" of Sicyonian paintings most probably encapsulated forms of idealization in both their physical and moral aspects. Apelles' "inimitable Alexander" would have achieved not only a remarkable physical likeness, but also an insight into Alexander's ambitious and charismatic persona, possibly with a heroic overtone, "ennobling its character," in the way Achilles was portrayed by Agathon and Homer (Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454b14). Apelles had achieved a reproduction of the image that Alexander wished to be handed down to posterity, one that showed "the same fierce martial vigor, the same great and glorious genius, the same fresh and youthful beauty, the same fair forehead with its back-streaming hair" (Apuleius, *Florid.* 7; tr. Butler 1909; Nielsen 1992). What is worth stressing, however, is that Apelles achieved such an "inimitable" painting with a simple, extremely limited and low-cost pigment palette.

The Aesthetics of the "Four-Color Palette"

Describing the portrait of Alexander the Great holding a thunderbolt, Pliny invites his readers to remember that the highly realistic effects achieved in the

painting – paid in gold coins measured by its weight – were produced using only four colors (*NH* 35.92). As Stewart points out, "This parsimony is the key to the entire description, deflating Alexander's extravagance and locating the pictorial genius at the hub of the narrative" (Stewart 1993 , 35). Pliny blames luxury (*luxuria*) for the moral decline of Rome and for the decadent state of the art of painting (Isager 1991), and expresses his preference for the old Greek masters, concluding with the nostalgic phrase: "Everything in fact was superior in the days when resources were scantier" (Pliny, *NH* 35.50; tr. Rackham 1952). In the same passage he gives an account of the four pigments that Apelles, Aetion, Melanthius, and Nicomachus used; pigments consisting of red and yellow ochers, a white clay, and charcoal black. This modest gamut of pigments allowed painters to produce their "immortal works." This praise of the "simplicity" of a painter's palette in a way echoes the moral connotation of the Platonic *haplotēs*, the corner-stone of Plato's city, presented in the education of the young as the pursuit of *euētheia* (*Rep.* 400e) and should be viewed in the light of Pliny's more general instructive moralizing and his attack on *luxuria*, as the opposite of the "ancient virtues" promoted by the Flavian dynasty. Pliny, by opposing the category of simple and somber colors (*colores austeri*) to the *colores floridi*, was above all concerned to show that the simplicity of the ancients was preferable to the modern proliferation of expensive materials (Isager 1991, 226–227; Brecoulaki 2006b; Rouveret 2007b).

But if we move from art criticism and take a closer look at the actual painter's palette, to what extent did the restricted number of pigments indeed represent an aesthetic choice? What were its "pictorial" virtues and limitations? Could it be specifically related to the painting of flesh, as J. Cage has suggested (Cage 1981)? The subdued pictorial effect resulting from a palette from which bright and highly prized pigments were excluded was indeed more appropriate for achieving physical likeness, considering the fact that saturated colors attract the eye of the spectator, often creating high contrasts and enhancing bi-dimensional effects. Cinnabar, for instance, the brightest red of the ancient palette, was too harsh to be used in figural painting, and that is why painters opted for the most opaque and less brilliant hues of iron-based ochers (Pliny, *NH* 35, 114–115). Even though we may not need to interpret Pliny's circumstantial account literally, for painters felt free to improvise by adding or subtracting a color from their palette, it was possible for skillful painters to exploit the virtues of a limited palette and produce a large enough gamut of hues with a restricted number of pigments. By mixing red ocher with white, a range of pinkish hues is achieved; by adding black, a range of browns and purple; the mixture of red and yellow produces orange hues; from the mixture of black and white, cold gray hues can be used for shading, giving the impression of blue when seen from a distance (on the "bluish" aspect of black see Bruno 1977, 73–77); olive-green hues may also be achieved through a mixture of yellow ocher and black. The expansion of intermixtures between

the four pigments alone could in fact produce 819 color variations (Bertrand 1893, 139; Cage 1981)! Despite the negative connotation that the word "mixture" (*krasis*, *mixis*) was occasionally endowed with in textual sources, due to its metaphorical association with decay, corruption (*pthora*), and alteration (*metabolē*, *alloiōsis*), the very practice of mixing pigments by painters, either by physical blending or by superimposition of multiple paint layers, is well documented in surviving Classical and Hellenistic painting (Brecoulaki 2006a, 442–450). In fact even Plutarch, who seems to praise the purity of unmixed colors as "virgin and undefiled" (*Quaest. Conv*. 725c), elsewhere, discussing Polygnotos' *Sack of Troy*, admits that realistic painting may not be achieved without mixtures and that such practices need not take away from the reputation of the artist (*De def. orac., Moralia*, V, 47). In Lucian's *Imagines* (6–7), the quality of a painter is measured in terms of his skill in mixing and laying on colors.

The Painter's Material Touch and the Evidence from Surviving Documents of Greek Painting

The information retrieved from texts is often confirmed by the surviving body of ancient Greek painting. Sometimes, the actual painted documents allow us to learn even more about the pictorial experience of Classical painters than the textual sources have recorded, and to document technical details that become significant in the context of mimetic representation. Despite the fact that no Classical panel painting has survived and that the documentation we possess comes from funerary contexts of the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods, it is possible to appreciate, if not the quality of lost masterpieces, at least a tangible testimony of the achievements of Greek painting at a time when this art had reached its culmination. The best preserved corpus of paintings, the one which allows us to evaluate a variety of technical applications and stylistic approaches to figural representation, comes from ancient Macedonia (Brecoulaki 2006a). Macedonian kings were patrons of the arts, articulating their cultural and political aspirations and adorning their court with the glory the art of painting had gained thanks to the great Athenian public buildings and Panhellenic sanctuaries. Prolific artists are said to have taken up residence at their court. King Archelaos had hired Zeuxis to decorate his house at Aegae (Aelian, *Hist. Misc*. 14.17), numerous portraits of Philip II and Alexander were produced by famous artists (Pliny, *NH* 35.95; 35.114), and Ptolemy Philadelphos collected drawings and paintings by the Sicyonian school (Plut. *Aratos* 12.5; 13.4; Ath. *Deipn.* 5, 196A–197C). On the facades and interiors of Macedonian funerary monuments – ranging chronologically between the third quarter of the fourth and the end of the third century BC – and through a variety of themes associated with male activities (hunting, war, racing, the symposium, philosophy) or in mythological scenes, we find painters dealing with the realistic rendering of the human figure. It is interesting to note that

although the surviving paintings have all been executed on wall or stone, their technical background relied on the *technē* of panel painting. This is particularly evident in both the use of organic binders mixed with their pigments, testifying to a generalized use of *secco* and tempera techniques, and in the manipulation of color in sophisticated mixtures and superimpositions of paint layers (Brecoulaki 2006a, 399–407). The meticulously executed paintings that are preserved on the royal tombs of Aegae, for instance, clearly reflect the dependence of these paintings on pre-existing panel originals which were probably created by famous painters of the Macedonian court. However, a wall painting – even one executed in a tempera technique – could hardly be expected to reproduce the mimetic effects that a painter using the encaustic technique on panel could achieve, this allowing the artist a broader spectrum of opportunities to exercise his craftsmanship, for example through the creation of more translucent and smoother layers of paint, thus enhancing subtler gradations of color.

From the technological studies of the Macedonian paintings, almost the entire gamut of pigments of the Classical painter's palette, as described in the textual sources, has been reconstructed (Brecoulaki 2006a; Kakoulli 2009). An ample variety of pigments of mineral and organic origin, including both sober and bright hues, testify to the coloristic possibilities that painters created in their quest to achieve realistic effects. A restricted palette, expanded by intermixtures, is used to render large-scale figures, but blue and green pigments are also introduced to indicate details in the faces or produce cool shadows in the bodies. The painters' color repertory is significantly amplified and diversified for the rendering of draperies, various objects, and floral motifs. I will use some of the most representative examples taken from the corpus of funerary Macedonian painting to show how anonymous yet skilled painters of the fourth century BC assimilated the technical know-how of their predecessors and experimented in the creation of lifelike painting effects to suggest body volume, facial features, and expressions.

Large-scale representations are usually painted directly on white, abstract backgrounds and are rarely part of a realistic landscape, as is the case of the hunting scene on the tomb of Philip II at Aegae (Andronikos 1984; Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2004). Dark blue backgrounds are also used to enhance the three-dimensional effect of the figures, showing a reliance on the sculptural tradition of pedimental compositions (Rhomiopoulou and Schmidt-Dounas 2010). In the majority of the paintings, flesh tones are rendered with a very limited variety of iron-based pigments, producing hues ranging from light pink and orange to dark brown and purple. The Classical "simple" palette offered the necessary ground on which painters relied in order to reproduce their figures and does not seem to represent a distinctive marker of a specific class of painters. Each artist uses its materials to fulfill different aesthetic requirements, according to his personal style and skill, but also

depending on the “message” a painting is expected to transmit to the viewer, within its specific social and cultural context. The earliest surviving painting preserved on the back of a marble throne in the so-called Tomb of Queen Eurydice at Aegae (third quarter of the fourth century BC) offers our closest parallel to a panel painting of the fourth century BC, in terms of both format and technique (egg tempera).[2] The painting reproduces a couple on a *quadriga*, identified as the gods Hades and Persephone, detached on a light blue background (Andronikos 1987; Kottaridi 2006). What is remarkable about this painting is the extreme accuracy in line drawing, combined with subtle tonal variations, which bring to mind the achievements of great masters. A detailed preliminary drawing was sketched directly on the white marble surface. The predilection for the use of lead white – a common panel painting material often attested in the later portraits of Greco-Roman Egypt (Corcoran and Svoboda 2010) – offered the painter advanced possibilities to build up his figures due to its thickness and opacity, and to highlight facial details in sharp and well-defined brushstrokes, as in the reflected light in the figure’s eyes (Figure 14.1). In accordance with the older Greek painting tradition in which differences in sex are represented using different skin colors (Grand-Clément 2011, 196–106), the god Hades’ complexion is rendered in orange-brown, while Persephone’s flesh preserves a peachy light hue. It is interesting to observe that despite the iconographic limitations imposed by the subject matter, a divine epiphany, the painter is experimenting with the realistic rendering of his figures’ facial features, as if he was striving to reproduce personalized traits. Prerequisites of realistic representations are even more evident on larger-scale figures, as, for example, on the reclining couple on the pediment of the so-called Tomb of the Palmettes in the nearby city of Mieza, or the standing figures on the facade of the tomb of Aghios Athanasios, near Thessaloniki, both monuments dated to the late fourth and early third centuries BC.

Figure 14.1 Aegae, "Tomb of Queen Eurydice," second half of fourth century BC. Painted marble throne. Hades and Persephone on a quadriga, detail.

Photo C. Simatos/Ephorate of Antiquities of Emathia. Copyright Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Archaeological Receipts Fund.

The two male figures depicted as standing guards on the facade of the Aghios Athanasios tomb, when seen from a distance, give the impression of real, three-dimensional bodies (Tsimbidou-Avloniti 2005, 142–147; Brecoulaki 2006a, 294–302, pls 99–101). It is perhaps the most tangible evidence of how ancient painting could produce *trompe l'oeil* effects with remarkable simplicity of means, even on walls (Figure 14.2). For the creation of the flesh of the two figures, unique in terms of their quality and excellent state of preservation in the corpus of early Hellenistic figural painting, a restricted palette of pigments, as described by Pliny, has been applied, producing a paler pinkish complexion for the figure on the left and a darker orange-brown tint for the figure on the right. A close look at the figures' faces allows the spectator to further discern individualized facial features and to get an insight into their "invisible" emotional disposition which is captured in the painted *eikon*. Their reclining heads and downward gaze, the sober expression of their faces and the luminous blue in the whites of the eyes as if they are about to burst into tears (Figure 14.3), release a feeling of grief and introversion: the spectator sees the face, but he also perceives emotions "through" it. Even if the painter of Aghios Athanasios was not a genius like the ones praised in literary sources, he was certainly able not only to effectively convey a lifelike appearance through his figures, but also to evoke their emotional state.

Figure 14.2 Aghios Athanasios, Thessaloniki, end of fourth century BC. Painted facade. Large-scale male figure, detail.

Photo M. Tsimbidou-Avloniti, 2005, pl. 38. Ephorate of Antiquities of the city of Thessaloniki. Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Archaeological Receipts Fund.

Figure 14.3 Aghios Athanasios, Thessaloniki, end of fourth century BC. Painted facade. Large-scale male figure, detail of the face.

Photo H. Brecoulaki, 2006, pl. 101.2. Ephorate of Antiquities of the city of Thessaloniki. Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Archaeological Receipts Fund.

The well-known hunting scene from the facade of the tomb of Philip II at Aegae offers the most complete surviving composition of ancient Greek painting. Since its discovery, it has attracted scholarly attention from various points of view, both historical and art historical, and many questions remain open as to the meaning of the scene and the identity of the persons depicted (Ignatiadou 2010; Franks 2012). Nonetheless, most scholars agree in recognizing Alexander in the central equestrian figure – in which case, this is the only original painted portrait of Alexander surviving today. Despite its scanty state of preservation, it is still possible to distinguish facial features and the will of the painter to emphasize Alexander's gaze with a large brushstroke of dark color below the eyes, one of his strongest features according to our textual sources (Plut. *Alex.* IV, 3). The actual color of the face's complexion is rather pale, but originally it must have been painted with hues of pink, as the rest of the best-preserved figures allow us to assume (Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2004, pl. 14). In Plutarch's well-known passage on Alexander's physical appearance, the author notes that "when Apelles painted Alexander wielding a thunderbolt, he did not reproduce his complexion accurately, but he made it appear darker and swarthy, whereas we are told that he was fair-skinned, with a ruddy tinge that showed itself especially upon his face and chest." It is possible that Apelles' decision to enhance Alexander's complexion by giving it a darker hue corresponded to the Archaic convention of depicting the male flesh skin as darker, as a marker of vigor and, by extension, of heroic allure.

Such an example is made evident on another Macedonian tomb (the so-called Tomb Bella) dated to the early third century BC, close to the royal necropolis of Aegae, where three large-scale figures occupy the upper part of its plain facade. The central figure, dressed in military attire, presumably identified with the person buried in the tomb, is flanked by a female offering him a wreath and by another warrior sitting upon a pile of shields (Drougou and Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 1999, 66–69, figs 90–94). The color of the central figure's flesh is significantly darker than that of the two other figures, probably serving to accentuate the status of the deceased with a heroic overtone (Brecoulaki 2012; Grand-Clément 2013). The association of a dark complexion with the heroic universe is made evident in Plutarch's account of Euphranor's Theseus, whose reddish skin – unlike the light complexion of Parrhasios' Theseus, "who had lived on a diet of roses" (Pliny, *NH* 35.129) – make the viewer exclaim, "Race of the great-hearted hero Erechtheus, whom once Athena nurtured, the daughter of Zeus" (*De Gloria Athen.* 345.2).

A different requirement of artistic verisimilitude, however, seems to have determined the color of the hunter's flesh in the Aegae scene, posing the problem of the interdependence between aesthetic and "moral" values in the production of a painting. In terms of coloristic effects, the hunting scene offers the most tangible evidence of a remarkably balanced use of warm and cool hues, which aims at reproducing realism and depth in both the rendering of the human figures and the elements of the landscape. Mastering the use of shading and manipulating the effects of his light source, the painter transfers onto the wall a technical knowledge which derives from the tradition of panel painting. A recent technological examination of the wall painting enriched our knowledge of the materials and pictorial methods applied to reproduce the human figure and achieve realistic effects.[3] Apart from the usual earthen gamut of pigments, which represents the base of an ancient painter's palette, organic pigments of pinkish and purple hues, together with copper-based green and blue pigments, have been identified. The warm hues resulting from iron-based and organic pigments were selectively applied to the bodies and faces of the figures to highlight muscles in rosy hues, to mark body elements that come forward in more intense purplish pink (Figure 14.4), or to color the cheeks and the lips in more or less saturated hues of red (Brecoulaki 2006a, pls 31–32, 35). The painter applied uniform layers of a dull olive-green color to achieve cooler hues and indicate shading in the receding parts of the bodies (Figure 14.5), by mixing carbon black with a rare copper-based green pigment, conichalcite (on the properties of this mineral see Brecoulaki and Perdikatsis 2002). The use of a green-hued color to produce shadows on the hunters' bodies represents a stylistic marker of the Aegae painter and inaugurates the tradition, in Western painting, of the so-called *verdaccio* technique, a soft greenish-brown hue that Italian and Flemish masters adopted as an underpainting, in order to enhance realism in the depiction of the flesh tone. The light color of the hunter's complexion does not follow the aesthetic

convention of a dark, brownish-red color for the male flesh. On the contrary, for both the bodies and the faces the painter uses delicate rosy and peachy hues that bring to mind the softness and transparency of coloris which Apelles achieved in his famous Pancaspe (Lucian *Imag.* 7), "neither too pale nor too high-coloured." The Greek work Lucian uses for the description of Pancaspe's flesh tint is *enaimon*, suggesting the effect produced by the fragile blood vessels running just under the skin. The only figure in the composition painted with a darker complexion in the hunting scene is the fully dressed hunter on the extreme right, "retardataire" in his fashions, as A. Cohen has remarked (Cohen 2010), holding the kind of net that Plato condemns as unheroic (*Leg.* 7.824). Ancient writings on physiognomy were very concerned with the color of complexions as an index of personality. Contrary to the positive "heroic" connotation with which a dark complexion was endowed in an older tradition, in pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomonics* the flesh color of the courageous and talented man (*andreiou* and *euphuous sēmeia*) should be of a brilliant (AI, 807b2; *to chrōma epi tou sōmatos oxū*), clear pinkish hue (AI, 807b17; *chrōma leukeruthron kai katharon*). Considering the social and cultural context in which the Aegae painting was produced, could we speculate that the painter of the hunting scene depicted his figures in a clear pinkish hue in order to mark their high social hierarchy and to simultaneously signify courage and winsomeness?

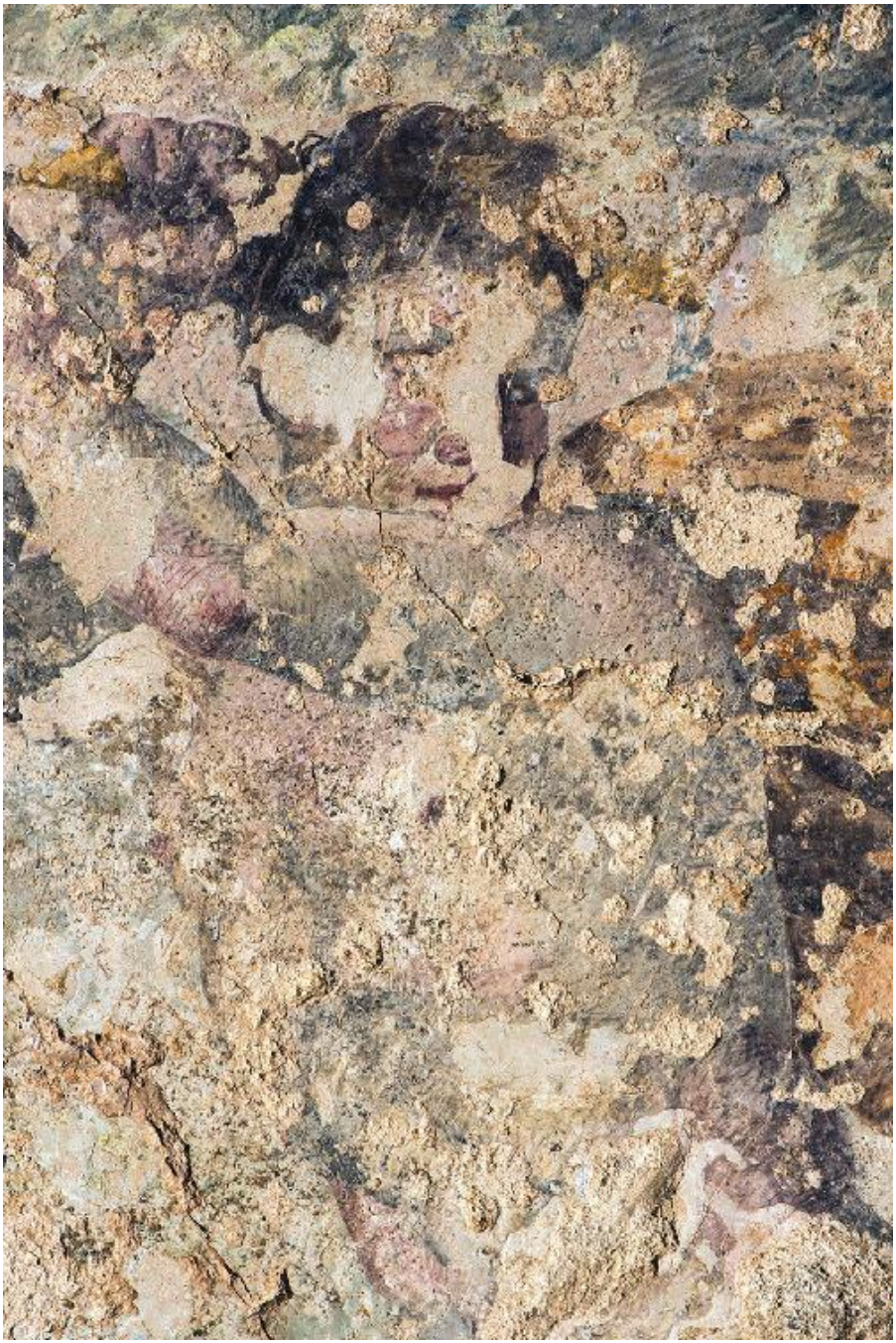

Figure 14.4 Aegae, Tomb of Philip II, 336 BC. Facade, painted frieze, detail of a hunter's body.

Photo C. Simatos/Ephorate of Antiquities of Emathia. Copyright Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Archaeological Receipts Fund.

Figure 14.5 Aegae, Tomb of Philip II, 336 BC. Facade, painted frieze, detail of a hunter's body.

Photo C. Simatos/Ephorate of Antiquities of Emathia. Copyright Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Archaeological Receipts Fund.

An additional cool pigment, blue this time (Egyptian blue), was used to mark the white area of the hunter's brown eyes, a technique that was also observed in the large-scale figures of the Aghios Athanasios tomb (Figure 14.3). Such a technical detail becomes significant in the field of artistic experimentations that enabled fourth-century BC painters to reproduce lifelike effects. In fact, recent research on ancient painting and sculptural polychromy has demonstrated that application of Egyptian blue in the white area of the eye represented a well-established technique, aiming at producing an effect of moistness and light that could revive and accentuate the gaze (Verri 2009; Verri, Opper, and Deviese 2010). It is interesting to note that this method was still practiced by painters of the first and second centuries AD (for examples of "Egyptian blue eyes" in the Fayoum portraits, see Verri 2009). The importance of the eyes within a portrait is emphasized in textual sources, often with a physiognomic dimension. Philostratus stresses the ampler possibilities that painting offers among plastic arts, in conveying the varying nature of eyes (*Imagines* I, 294–295 K). In Lucian's *Imagines* (6–8), the author describes the features of the Emperor Lucius Verus' mistress Panthea, comparing them with fragments from some of the most famous sculptures and

paintings and stressing the beauty of her gaze "so liquid, and at the same time so clear and winsome" (Cistaro 2009). The melting gaze and heavenward turn of Alexander's eyes is recounted by Plutarch (*Moralia* 335; *Alexander* 4, 1–2), and a generation after him, in Polemon's physiognomics, eyes with a moist and bright look "suggest lofty thoughts which accomplish great deeds" (Elsner 2007). "Good" eyes are associated with brightness and are full of "beautiful light" (Polemon, *Physiognomonics*, Leiden ch. 1, A16). On the basis of the archaeological evidence we possess, we may wonder whether use of Egyptian blue to mark the white area of the eyes not only fulfilled aesthetic requirements – to achieve a chromatic balance between cool and warm hues in the face – but was a representational invention allowing the suggestion of both physical and "moral" beauty.

Conclusion: Artistic *Mimēsis* and Ways of Seeing

While the use of a blue pigment in the white area of the eyes allowed painters to achieve an enhanced effect of physical resemblance, we have to be aware that at the same time they were moving a step away from "nature's truth," and that what they were striving to imitate was above mere physical perception and reproduction. In fact, nothing "blue" really exists in the white area of the human eye and the color blue can only be found in the eye's iris. The cool hue that ancient painters wished to evoke in the white area of the eye through technical means is their "subjective" interpretation of the rather warm hue that the small veins running under the sclera are likely to produce. What is it then that a painter *imitates*? The importance of observing likeness directly from nature and not from art works was already underlined by Aristotle in *De partibus animalium*: "If we study mere likeness of these things and take pleasure in so doing, because then we are contemplating the painter's or the carver's Art which fashioned them, and yet fail to delight much more in studying the works of Nature themselves … that would be a strange absurdity indeed" (tr. Peck 1937). The famous painter Eupompos of the Sicyonian school encouraged painters to imitate "Nature herself" and not another artist (*HN* 34, 62), because in an artistic reproduction, regardless of its degree of likeness to the original, Nature is inevitably "filtered" through the artist's eye. Likewise Pliny the Younger fears that the artist might try to improve on the paintings he is meant to copy and not produce accurate representations (*Letters* IV. XXVIII; Perry 2000). The problem of representational *mimēsis* and *homeiotēs* with the original is clearly posed not only with regard to what the eye cannot possibly perceive – the *psychēs ēthos* about which Socrates and Parrhasios are arguing in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (3.10), "that which has neither shape nor color … and is not even visible" – but also for the natural phenomena that the eye can indeed perceive. The skin color may be reproduced, as in the case of the *andreikelon* of Eupompos' Theseus, with dark red and brown ochers, with a lighter rosy complexion like the one in

Parrhasios' version of the hero, or with greenish reflections through the combination of more pigments, as the Aegae hunters demonstrate (Laneyrie Dagen 2008). In each case, a painter's challenge is to embody in his paintings the knowledge of reality even while accepting that artistic reality cannot but be a subjective interpretation of natural phenomena, affected by social and cultural criteria and preconceptions about beauty and moral values.

Likeness to the original, with reference both to the reproduction of the visible character of a man and the illusion of its psychological engagement (Halliwell 2002), was certainly a dominant goal among Classical painters aiming at pictorial *mimēsis*. But there were many ways of "seeing" and interpreting reality, as the numerous anecdotes on painters' competitions and the reactions of viewers suggest. Apelles hid behind his works to listen to the public judgments of passing spectators, ready to correct his paintings (Pliny, *NH* 35.84–85). Alexander expressed a certain dislike on viewing his equestrian portrait produced by Apelles at Ephesos, despite the fact that the artist was considered the best portrait painter of his time (Pliny, *NH* 35.95). Together with the accumulation and assimilation of specific pictorial means which enabled painters to imitate the physical appearance of the human figure or the detailed representation of real-world objects in general, preoccupations with the depiction of the non-visible are often to be found in textual sources. Orators have sung the praises of Timanthes' Iphigeneia for having exhausted the spectrum of grief in the expressions of all those present (Pliny, *NH* 35.74). Aristides from Thebes was famous for his ability to depict the mind and express the feelings of human beings, which the Greeks call *ēthē*, and also their emotions (Pliny, *NH* 35.98). In Xenophon's *Memorabilia* Socrates asks Parrhasios whether the feelings of sympathy and aversion that human beings express by their looks may be imitated in the eyes of a painted figure (Halm-Tisserant 2009).

No painting by Apelles is preserved today, nor is any other signed work of a Greek master from the famous *pinakothēkai* of Athens or Sicyon. By not actually existing, ancient Greek painting has incited us to imagine and reconstruct what probably never existed. Nonetheless, current archaeological evidence allows us to get an idea of what Greek painting looked like. If the preserved corpus of paintings of the fourth century BC in Greece adorns walls, stones, or furniture of funerary monuments, the extraordinary portrait *pinakothēkē* of Greco-Roman Egypt encapsulates the tradition of Greek panel painting in its last effulgence (Doxiadis 1995; Riggs 2005). In this Roman province of the Hellenized East, Greek painters of the second and third centuries AD still sought the "spiritual" in their portraits without sacrificing "materiality," as would prove to be the case of the Christian art which followed. The "fear" of Plato that lifelike paintings will interact somehow with reality and will create "false impressions," as expressed in *Republic* 10, in a sense anticipated the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy 12 centuries

later. However, the requirement to make man "look high above the original," even in Byzantine icons, where representational *mimēsis* will no longer have to deal with "eikastic" image making (Guastini 2011), may be traced in the beneficial transformation John of Damascus refers to as "*kalēn alloiōsin*," a concept encompassing the Platonic notions of "beauty" and "goodness" from a different perspective.

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FURTHER READING

A. Reinach's *Receuil Milliet* (Reinach 1921) remains the most comprehensive anthology of ancient texts on Greek painting. Especially valuable is the reference work by Rouveret (1989), with a dense overview of ancient painting and the first systematic attempt to associate texts with images and archaeological documentation. The most stimulating and in-depth approach to

the problems of artistic mimesis in ancient Greece is provided by Halliwell's seminal work (2002) and his relevant articles on the topic (Halliwell 2000, 2001, and 2005). For Pliny the Elder and his 35th book of *Natural History*, see Jex-Blake and Sellers (1896) and a most up-to-date analysis by Isager (1991). Issues of verisimilitude and artistic quality as expressed in Pliny's writings are discussed by Perry (2000) and Naas (2004). The volume edited by Rouveret, Dubel and Nass (2006) addresses interesting questions as to the value and use of color in ancient painting and polychromy, based on the interpretation of Greek and Latin texts. Recent publications on the surviving painted documents of the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods in Macedonia have shed more light on the themes and styles of Greek painting (Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2004; Tsimbidou-Avloniti 2005; Rhomiopoulou and Schmidt-Dounas 2010) and its technological aspects (for a synthetic presentation of the corpus of painting in ancient Macedonia and the function of color, see Brecoulaki 2006a). For a critical art-historical evaluation of aspects of Macedonian iconography see Cohen (2010).

NOTES

1 *Traditur enim Zeuxin, ut puto, pinxisse puerum uuam tenentem et cum tanta esset similitudo uuae ut etiam aues aduolare faceret operi, quendam ex spectatoribus dixisse, aues male existimare de tabula; non fuisse enim aduolaturas si ille similis esset. Zeuxin aiunt obleuisse uuam et seruasse id quod melius*. E. Perry discusses this passage in a footnote (Perry 2000 , 452 n.25).

2 The analytical results of this investigation have been presented at The 5th International Round Table on Greek and Roman Sculptural and Architectural Polychromy, Athens, November 7–8, 2013: H. Brecoulaki, A. Kottaridi, G. Verri, A. G. Karydas, S. Sotiropoulou, L. Lazzarini, M. P. Colombini, A. Andreotti, Z. Papliaka, J. Dyer, and G. Georgiou, "A New Technological Investigation on Two Exceptional Painted Marble Artifacts of the Late Classical Period: The Sarcophagus from Tomb 128 Et Kition and the Marble Throne from the *Tomb of Eurydice* at Aegae."

3 A technological examination of the hunting frieze took place in February 2013, in collaboration with the 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, A. Karydas (International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna), and G. Verri (The Courtauld Institute of Art, London).

CHAPTER 15
Ways of Looking at Greek Vases

François Lissarrague

Vases versus Painting

Greek pottery, particularly that produced in Attica, struck archaeologists and collectors from very early on with the richness and diversity of its decoration. The quantity of images it set before our eyes appeared to be a source of information about the life and beliefs of the ancient Greeks. Eduard Gerhard, for example, in his remarkable report on the finds of Vulci, announces with quasi-prophetic enthusiasm: "here is a new spring … to nourish the work of historians."[1] Very quickly these vases were used to illustrate Greek mythology, to increase our knowledge of ancient life, and, not least, to give us an idea of what large-scale painting, known to us from texts, but forever lost, might have been like. Vases took the place of painting, and we speak more often of vase painting than of painted vases. Often these vases have been deliberately dematerialized by separating the images from the vases on which they appear: this choice is evident in the publication by Hancarville of the first Hamilton collection.[2] In effect the shape of the vases is engraved separately, rendered in sober lines which show up their formal structure, with all the precision that one applies to the elements of architecture; the profiles are detailed, accompanied sometimes by measurements which give these vases the appearance of capitals. The images, on the other hand, are given a much richer treatment, in color, and set into large frames inspired by ornamental motifs found on the vases, but flattened out, so that spherical or circular shapes are transformed into flat, rectangular images. In sum, vases have been made rectangular and painting straightened out. Such a choice, even though it is not always as strongly marked in graphic reproductions, is characteristic of the majority of histories of Greek art, whether it be E. Pfuhl's great book *Malerei und Zeichniung der Griechen* (1923) or Martin Robertson's *Greek Painting* (1959), not to mention the work of Beazley, to whom we owe so much about the understanding of Attic pottery (Kurtz 1983). Great efforts were made, particularly by Reichhold, in his magisterial enterprise *Griechische Vasenmalerei*, together with Furtwängler, to reproduce the graphic richness of selected vases in magnificent drawings (Furtwängler and Reichhold 1904–1932). The same goes for Hall's drawings for Richter at New York or Anderson and Chapman for Caskey and Beazley at Boston.[3] Today too the methods of panoramic photography seek to eliminate the third dimension, to unroll images, which are spread out like a cylinder in order to make friezes which can be taken in at a single glance. All these methods have

the effect of flattening the vase, of giving it a surface which is compatible with that of a book.[4] In sum, the vase has been transformed into a picture.

This situation is in fact bound up with a double constraint, one intellectual, the other material. Intellectually, priority has been given to the image not only as a substitute for painting, but also as providing information on mythology, daily life, and customs. It is treated as documentary evidence, as a source. This intellectual choice is sometimes clearly adopted, as we have seen in the case of Gerhard, for example. It is deliberately highlighted by G. Nicole in the preface to his book: “We beg the reader, mainly curious about painting, to forget as much as possible that the support of the gracious representations analyzed in this book are made of clay” (1926, 5). But more often the choice remains implicit; vases are treated as images and the use of the object which carries them is, if not denied, at least passed over in silence. The material constraint which leads to this neglect of the vase as object is less obvious and barely discussed, but it is nevertheless very strong. We derive our knowledge of vases sometimes from direct experience in museums; in this case we approach these objects, which yet remain distant, separated by a glass and the reflections that it generates, without being able to touch them, since they are too fragile and too precious to be entrusted to any chance comer. Sometimes, and more often, we know about vases from publication in printed form in books. In both cases, whether book or museum, the vase is an immobile object, set at a distance, whose materiality is, as it were, completely removed by the engraving or drawing, or rendered inert by the conventions of museum display. We should not complain; these constraints are necessary for the conservation of often fragile objects, and the book (or the computer screen) remains the best means of disseminating widely what would otherwise be inaccessible. But we lose something essential of the poetics of these vases, certain aspects of which I should like to elucidate here. I shall do so without providing illustrations, which would contradict my purpose, but will instead describe the dynamic effects with regard to a selection of vases chosen to exemplify the possibilities. If we want to take account of the complexity of phenomena concerning painted vases, we must restore their three-dimensionality and the dynamics of their usage. We need to consider how the images are perceived by those who hold these vases in their hands, and at the same time how the images are linked by the painters who decorate them. It is therefore from a double perspective – the handling of the object-image, and the associations of the images on the object – that the following discussion is based.

Handling the Vase

The object-image. I borrow this notion from Jerome Baschet (2008) and medievalists who have used it in connection with the “vierges ouvrantes” or shrine madonnas and other ritual objects which incorporate images. Attic

vases belong to this category; they are in essence used at the symposium and belong to the series of games and possible entertainments on offer to the drinkers. Nothing obliges the drinker to pay attention to the images which decorate the drinking vessels (cf. Veyne 1991, 341). The minute attention to detail with which we, as art historians, study these objects would no doubt surprise the symposiasts; we are like linguists who draw up the grammar of a language, not like native speakers who talk without thinking about such questions. But this detailed examination allows us to bring to light the possibilities of a system which connects the practical use of a vase with the perception of the images which it carries.

One rarely sees at a glance the entirety of an image on a vase, even if its dimensions are small. *Lekythoi* and *pyxides* whose surfaces are quasi-cylindrical need to be handled by the spectator if he wants to see as a whole the images which decorate them. Thus on a *lekythos* attributed to the Diosophos painter[5] we see first a fountain and a warrior, but it is only when turning the vase that we see a young horseman galloping and a broken *hydria* beneath the horse; turning it again one sees a girl running away. The whole corresponds to the standard design of the pursuit of Troilus and Polyxena by Achilles. When turning the *lekythos,* the spectator enacts the movement which animates this pursuit. It is the same with certain *pyxides* which represent Peleus pursuing Thetis in a continuous frieze whilst the other Nereids flee, as on a *pyxis* at Copenhagen.[6] Other scenes of pursuit, always on *pyxides*, are constructed according to the same dynamic model which uses the cylindrical surface of the vase as the motor of the movement represented on the image; thus Eros pursues women, Boreas Orithyia, Poseidon Amphitirite,[7] and so on.

In other cases the dynamics of the image depend on the orientation given to the vase itself. On the medallion of a cup attributed to the proto-Panaitian group,[8] two wrestlers confront each other beneath the gaze of a referee named Asopokles. The winner, on his knees, is named Euenor (the inscription is now very badly preserved); his opponent, whom he topples over his shoulder, is completely upside down, his head down, his feet in the air, leaning on the line of the medallion; he is named Antimachos ("opponent in contest"), which seems a very appropriate name, and the inscription itself is reversed: in order to read it one must turn the cup just as the wrestler turns his opponent. The writing, which is integral to the image, functions simultaneously as the vector and the motor of the representation.

In another case, the circularity of the decorated surface, which brings with it the effects of rotation, is sometimes used by painters to represent dancing. There is a fine example of this on a Boston *phialē*[9] where a line of women holding each other by the hand turn around an altar in front of which stands a musician. A more complex variant appears on a Corinthian *phialē* in the National Archaeological Museum at Athens;[10] the central part of the *phialē*, the *omphalos*, is decorated with a procession of women who advance to the

sound of a pipe, as in the earlier example. But this scene is in turn surrounded by another, on a larger scale, which occupies the whole area of the bowl. This time it is komasts who gesticulate in all directions, sometimes obscenely, in a movement which contrasts with the solemnity of the women. The two concentric circles both complement and contrast with each other: the men are oriented centripetally, the women centrifugally; the men are full of movement, the women are not; the scale of the men is double that of the women. The user of the vase is obliged to adapt his gaze depending on whether he focuses his attention on one or other of these two friezes.[11] The effect achieved by the painter depends on two simultaneous and incompatible ways of looking, which makes the decoration of this vase unstable.

Connective Dynamics

Very often it is in fact the relation between different images decorating the same vase which allows the play of tension, of variation, or of complementarity, whose complex typology merits closer investigation. Some vases carry a single painted surface, as we have seen. Others distribute their images on two sides, sometimes clearly separated, sometimes continuous; this is the case with *amphorae*, *kratēres*, and *stamnoi*, for example. Others have three registers of images, as with *hydriae* with *predella* or cups. Each vase is thus in itself the vehicle of a little system of images which are often freely associated, but which sometimes produce significant effects. This is not the place to make a complete examination, but one can define certain "rules of the game" and observe what they can allow, from the point of view of the poetics of the images. Again one must exercise caution: nothing compels the drinker to look at the images which adorn the vessel from which he draws the wine or drinks it. Nor is he compelled to look for an associative logic in these images. But the possibility of doing so exists; so it is worth examining its rules.

The relation between the different images which decorate the same vase varies according to the form and structure of the support: sometimes they are all visible together, but on different rungs, as on the neck of a *kratēr* or the shoulder of a *hydria*; sometimes they are visible in succession, from one side to the other of a vase. Thus one can see Heracles advancing on one side of an amphora, but without knowing toward what; it is only when turning the vase or changing places that one sees on the other side Geryon, for example,[12] or the hydra of Lerna,[13] an archer,[14] or an Amazon.[15] The effect of anticipation and surprise is possible with Heracles, the hero of multiple exploits, because there is scope for him to meet many different adversaries; in deferring the response the painter implicitly allows the spectator to anticipate the whole series of possible exploits, which adds more to the prestige of the hero. One finds the same effect with Zeus, alone on one side of an amphora, advancing toward Ganymede represented on the reverse,[16] or toward a woman who is running away, perhaps Aigina.[17] The same effect can be seen again, on a

different register, with a referee who comes to complement a scene with a discus thrower[18] or a citharode.[19] One could multiply examples of this type of two-timed representation, which plays on the expectation of the spectator and the response depicted on the image. In all these cases the figure is not framed by an ornamental border, but floats on the black surface of the vase, as if the frame were the vase itself, as if the blackness of the glaze invited one to pass from one side to the other. Sometimes the division of the image on the two sides is made in a way that exploits these spatial properties. On a *pelikē* attributed by Martin Robertson to Euthymides,[20] we see to the right of the scene an *aulētēs* accompanying two dancers who are jumping in the air. From one side they are seen facing us, on the other, with their backs towards us, as if the vantage point of the spectator, as he looks around the vase, makes the dancers turn around as well. The effect is not complete, because the image of the musician does not change from one side to the other, but the depiction of the dancers gives the impression that the vase and the figures merge into one space. In this case the painter has attempted something which is hardly ever repeated elsewhere. The Kleophrades painter tried an interesting variant. On an amphora in Würzburg[21] we see Hector on one side (named by an inscription) holding a belt, viewed from behind and being dragged to the right by an old man whose name is lost (Priam or Antenor). On the reverse we see a warrior facing us holding a sword still in its scabbard, dragged to the left by an old man named Phoenix. We recognize the scene between Hector and Ajax, when their combat is interrupted by nightfall and they separate from each other whilst exchanging gifts, without either being able to reach his camp (*Iliad* 7.304ff.). The spatial effect marks at one and the same time the exchange of gifts and the separation of the heroes. The single image is split between one side and the other of the vase, creating a visual tension that is the pictorial equivalent of the interrupted duel and the exchange of gifts.

The same effect of cutting the image in two in order to divide it between one side and the other can be found on a *pelikē* in Berlin[22] where one sees a fountain on each side, seen in profile and forming a kind of frame to the picture; on one side a woman comes to fill a *hydria*, in the conventional manner; on the other side there is a satyr filling an amphora. Viewed from the side, the two fountains are back to back as if to make one: the two elements which appear on one side (a satyr and an amphora) involve a reference to wine, which transforms the fountain of water into a fountain of wine and uses the standard schema to make a joke about wine and the drunkenness of satyrs.[23]

The connection which unites the two sides of a vase is sometimes less visually constraining when it depends not on a repetition but on an association (Steiner 2007), either narrative or formal. For example, on a bobin by the Pistoxenos painter,[24] on one side is the figure of Heracles pursuing Nereus who is running away to the left; on the other side, Peleus pursues Thetis who is

running away to the right. The connection between one side and the other is doubly marked: formally by the motif of the dolphin which accompanies the marine deities, Nereus, the father, and Thetis, his daughter; narratively by the schema of pursuit, which repeats the composition whilst varying its orientation. The homology between the two scenes, which are not necessarily connected from a narrative point of view (since the two episodes do not occur in a single story) is determined by the painter who organizes them in sequence. The same theme – Peleus seizing Thetis – figures on an amphora close to the Leagros group,[25] joined on the other side with an image of combat at the center of which is the body of Achilles carried away by Ajax. Between the two scenes is a thematic link: Achilles, born from the union of Thetis and Peleus. The connection is made on this level alone, without any formal element inviting us to associate the two sides of the vase (Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague 2012). In the same way, on an amphora which portrays the departure of a warrior on one side, and the return of a dead warrior on the other, the link is essentially thematic and non-visual;[26] these are two sequences in the same ensemble.

In all these examples the association between one side and the other depends on a variety of phenomena: when facing an image the spectator is in suspense; he can make mental hypotheses which may or may not be confirmed by what is on the back. He can anticipate a narrative sequence following on from the first image. He can anticipate a thematic match, or an image which is formally homologous. He can anticipate the rest of the image when it is divided between two sides of a vase, and this "rest" may or may not create a surprise. In all cases, the perception of the image does not happen at once; there is the moment of anticipation, of handling the vase, the tension between expectation and response, which creates a form of aesthetic pleasure.

When the vase carries three or more images, the aesthetic play does not change radically, but becomes more complex. And this is the case both with *hydriae* and with cups, though in different ways. *Hydriae* often carry several images, all visible on the same side of the vase, but on different scales. This allows variation, whose possibilities several painters exploited. This is particularly the case with the Antimenes painter, who often decorated *hydriae* on the shoulder, body, and predella: three different levels for images whose connections vary. Sometimes the link is tight, as on a *hydria* in the Vatican[27] which features Heracles' fight against the Nemean lion on the shoulder, Heracles' chariot, which accompanies Athena and Dionysus on the body, and a lion between two wild boars on the predella. The figure of the lion is found on all registers and clearly indicates Heracles' strength. Sometimes the connection is looser, linking together two or three images, as on a *hydria* in Altenburg[28] where the scene on the shoulder is echoed on the predella. Heracles fights against the Nemean lion, stretched out on the ground, whilst on the predella two lions have immobilized a bull on the ground: the animal

combat is the exact metaphor for the heroic combat. Between the two minor scenes, an assembly of the gods has no direct connection with the Theban hero, but it places him on the threshold of Olympus, which he will eventually enter.

The perception of the images which decorate a cup necessarily has a temporal dimension. The drinker sees the exterior of the cup, then the interior, once he has drunk from it, or, conversely, the medallion and then the sides. Nothing is determined in advance; but there are always at least two successive time frames, if not three (if we include the movement from one side to the other). Often the scenes decorating a cup complement one another, particularly in the case of the great red-figure painters of the late Archaic period: Douris, Macron, and the Brygos painter among them. But very often the painters produce shifting effects, from one scene to another. Thus, we see a *kōmos* or a banquet on the outside of a cup and a Dionysiac figure on the inside,[29] or, indeed, the opposite: the Dionysiac world on the outside, that of men on the medallion.[30] We also move from the symposium to the *kōmos*, or from the symposium to athletic exercise.[31] Each cup thus produces from a relatively limited repertoire a large variety of effects. Similarly, in the case of the mythological repertoire, the associations are not determined in advance. Very often a mythic scene occupies the two sides of a cup, and the medallion extends this theme, or suggests another. The ransom of Hector is an example. On a cup by Oltos in Munich,[32] which depicts the ransom of Hector on the outside, we find on the medallion a handsome young man seated and holding a branch. On another cup in New York,[33] the ransom occupies both sides, and the medallion, whilst focusing on the essential, takes up the motif of Priam seated at the foot of Achilles' bed. An almost identical motif – the confrontation between Achilles and the corpse of Hektor – is found on the medallion of a cup in the Louvre,[34] but the outside, in place of the ransom, depicts the sacrifice of Polyxena, after the death of Achilles. The association between the images, as we can see, is not programmed in advance, but plays on the different possibilities in a great variety of ways.

The series of cups representing the dispute over the arms of Achilles is remarkable from this point of view. We know of four cups, all of which show on one side the dispute between Odysseus and Ajax, on the other the vote, which gives the victory to Odysseus (Spivey 1994). The four medallions are different: the surrender of Briseis,[35] the surrender of the arms to a young man,[36] the suicide of Ajax,[37] and Odysseus, Diomedes and Dolon.[38]

These different modes of association, of connection, and of complementarity vary according to the painters and are a constituent element of their styles. The Antimenes painter, discussed above, or the Berlin painter in particular made much use of these possibilities and invented original solutions. The spatial constraints produced by the shape of a vase and the different surfaces to be decorated necessitate a configuration of images, which we tend to forget

when reducing the decoration of a vase to a flat image. The multiplicity of images on a vase creates an effect of variety – of *poikilia*, which is an essential part of the visual pleasure produced by these objects. When decorating the vase the painter can create the effects of sequential narrative, of thematic association, of formal homology, or of fragmentation, which the drinker, when holding the vase, can subsequently activate or not, depending on the degree of attention he pays to the object placed before his eyes and in his hands.

From Visual Connections to Iconographic Programs

The examples so far considered involve relatively simple associations of images; but from the Archaic period onward there existed two more complex types of association which need to be taken into account for the sake of completeness. These are, on the one hand, so-called "synoptic" images, and on the other hand, cycles or iconographic ensembles which have been the subject of a number of discussions, in particular in terms of visual narrative (Stansbury-O'Donnell 1999 ; Giuliani 2013).

The term "synoptic" was used by Snodgrass (1998, 58) to describe an image which contains elements that are chronologically distinct. Thus on a cup in Boston,[39] dated to the years 560–550, one sees, at the same time, (i) Circe transforming Odysseus' companions into animals, (ii) Eurylochus departing to warn Odysseus of this danger, and (iii) Odysseus drawing his sword to interrupt the spell. These three successive moments in the narrative appear simultaneously in a single composition and allow the production of a visual equivalent of a verbal narration.

Another type of combination of narrative elements in a single image appeared, around 550, on an amphora in the Louvre[40] where one sees (i) on the left Cassandra, pursued by Ajax, taking refuge as a suppliant by the statue of Athena, and (ii) on the right Neoptolemus using the infant Astyanax as a weapon to kill Priam who is taking refuge on an altar. These two scenes form a part of the *Iliou Persis* and, though they do not mark successive moments in a single action, they constitute distinct episodes of the same narrative ensemble which is often reworked by painters in the form of associated scenes (Moret 1975; Anderson 1997; Mangold 2000). One of the most complex examples from the *Iliou Persis* is depicted on the shoulder of a *hydria* attributed to the Kleophrades painter:[41] one sees there on a single continuous frieze (i) Aeneas fleeing from Troy carrying Anchises on his back, (ii) Ajax and Cassandra, (iii) Neoptolemus and Priam, (iv) Andromache (?) attacking a Greek, and (v) Akamas and Demophon freeing Aithra. Rather than aiming at a complete narrative of the story, it is the accumulation of violence which determines the painter's choice here. We can see a similar method in

operation on a cup attributed to Onesimos,[42] where the cumulative effect is reinforced by the device which places the murder of Priam by Neoptolemus on the medallion of the cup and distributes a series of eight other episodes on an area around the medallion: (i) Aithra freed by Demophon, (ii) Sthenelus and a Trojan woman, (iii) Ajax and Cassandra, (iv) a fight, (v) Odysseus, Antenor, and Theano, (vi) an almost completely missing scene, (vii) Menelaus and Helen, and (viii) Andromache(?) (Williams 1991).

This effect of accumulation is particularly significant in the case of Theseus, whose exploits constitute an initiatory journey from Troezen to Athens (Neils 1987; Calame 1990) which painters sought to represent in the form of a true cycle, as one sees on a cup by the Kleophrades painter[43] and later on another one by Aison[44] (Olmos 1992). The same Kleophrades painter is also one of the first to represent the series of Heracles' exploits[45] in the form of a continuous cycle, on the neck of a volute *kratēr*. In this case it is again the heroic dimension which is emphasized by the choice of images, which intensifies the theme through the multiplication of his deeds.

Apart from the synoptic image and episodes placed in a series, other combinations of images appear, on several registers, using several levels of representation on the surface of the vase. This phenomenon exists as early as the geometric period, in a purely rhythmical and ornamental form, just as in the various orientalizing styles of the seventh to sixth centuries. But from the end of the seventh century vases with complex decoration begin to appear, divided between several registers which are not repetitive, but seem to be organized according to a logic which scholars have tried to elucidate, without always reaching agreement. One of the earliest examples is a proto-Corinthian *oinochoe*, now in the Villa Giulia, which is generally called after the name of its owner, the Chigi *olpē*.[46] This vase, of modest dimensions, consists of several zones placed on top of one another which completely cover the vase and represent (i) a hoplite battle on the top zone, (ii) below – and in a different pictorial technique – a narrow frieze of running dogs, then (iii) a parade of horsemen and the Judgment of Paris, and finally (iv) a hunting scene waiting in ambush. Hurwit (2002) was one of the first people to show that it was possible to establish a thematic relationship between war, hunting, and the parade of horsemen; the Judgment of Paris, which seemed out of place in such a context, in fact fitted perfectly into this scheme, signifying the passage of the young Paris into the adult world. Since then, scholars have suggested ways of deepening this type of analysis or of modifying its logic, but in all cases the idea of an iconographic program, more or less strict, has been defended with excellent arguments; this program is not narrative, but structural, combining different categories of cultural practice (Torelli 2007; Mugione 2012; D'Acunto 2013).

From this perspective, the most remarkable vase is undoubtedly the François Vase.[47] This *kratēr*, signed by the painter Klitias and the potter Ergotimos,

comprises a large number of scenes rigorously organized on six registers and distributed over the entire surface of the vase, including the handles and the foot, which is unique. The organization of such pictorial richness is probably not random, and from very early on interpreters have tried to account for its organization. No one contests the general idea of a figurative logic, but there has been no agreement on the various interpretations which have been advanced by modern interpreters (Torelli 2007; see Shapiro, Iozzo, and Lezzi-Hafter 2013, 9–17). These differences of opinion do not invalidate the idea of a coherent scheme, but they indicate a certain degree of flexibility which is inherent in the very principle of these "accumulations." Each painter can associate or accumulate according to the different types of logic already discussed – homology, complementarity, or opposition – and the spectator in turn can react to these associations. On the François vase, Achilles is predominant on one side, Theseus on the other. The rest remains open, and the correspondences between the different zones are structural rather than narrative; the correspondences vary, depending on the interpretations attributed to each scene by commentators, but the principle remains the same.

This general principle applies to most of the vases used in the symposium. The François vase is one of the most elaborate cases, and an early one; one can imagine it standing in the middle of the dining room, among the drinkers; they do not have to produce an interpretation, as we do, but they could react, at will, in accordance with their culture and their memory, to the images displayed on the surface of this exceptional vase.

Ever since they started representing stories or describing aspects of Athenian life, in a more or less idealized way, vase painters tried to catch the eye of the viewer, and to please the drinker at the symposium by creating, through the images, interactive games. The vases are moving objects in the hands of the drinkers and what we could call the "poetics of vases" at the symposium is an interactive poetics, opening up a variety of possibilities which can be used by the drinker at will to enrich the verbal, visual, and poetic play in the space of the symposium. The images can be connected with one another in a variety of ways, creating the effects of anticipation, discrepancy, and surprise which assimilate the culture of images to a game. This is one of the pleasures of the banquet.

Abbreviations used in the notes:

ABV:
J.D. Beazley, *Attic Black-figure Vase-painters* (Oxford, 1956)

ARV2:
J.D. Beazley, *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1963)

BA:
Beazley Archive Pottery Database online: http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/

databases/pottery.htm (followed by the vase number in the database)

CVA:
Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, since 1921

LIMC:
Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, 9 vols, Munich/Zurich, 1981–1999

Paralipomena:
J.D. Beazley, *Paralipomena: additions to Attic Black-figure Vase-painters and to Attic Red-figure Vase-painters* (Oxford, 1971)

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FURTHER READING

On the connectivity of images two articles, one by Stupperich (1992), another more recent by Dietrich (2013), can be considered as pioneering. The most important work on the dynamic aspect of the vase as an image bearer is by Martens (1992) (as it is in French, it has not received the attention it deserves). Hurwit (1976) and (1977), on frame, are a landmark. Lissarrague (1990) explores the role of vases in the symposium; Neer (2002) gives the best account of the relation between vase painters and sympotic circles. More recently, the relation between shape and iconography has been explored by Schmidt (2005), whereas the monograph by Lynch (2011) is an interesting case of a sympotic set of vases found in an Athenian house.

There is no study of the general structure of the repertoire of Greek vase painting; Metzger (1951) is still the only general survey for the fourth century; one can have a sense of the repertoire through the handbooks of Boardman (1974, 1975, 1989). The best general introduction to vase studies is Sparkes

(1996).

NOTES

1 From *Annali dell'Instituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* (Rome, 1831), p. 111–218 and excerpts, p. 3, n. 11: "Fons recens fluit eruditionis multiplicis, quo vel grammaticorum hortuli irrigentur, artis, antiquitatis, historiae cognitio mirifice promovetur."

2 *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Hon.W. Hamilton* (Naples, 1765).

3 G.M. Richter and L.F. Hall, *Red-figured Athenian Vases in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York* (New Haven, 1936); L.D. Caskey and J.D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1931–1963).

4 See for example *CVA Louvre 13 (France 21)* by F. Villard and the exhibition catalogue edited by C. Landes and A.F. Laurens, *Les vases à mémoire: les collections de céramique grecque dans le Midi de la France* (Lattes, 1988). Several vases on the website of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston are photographed with the same technique of unrolling the image (e.g. 63.1246; 65.908; 97.368; 97.371).

5 Lille SPB11; ABV 703/15ter, Diosphos painter; BA 306772.

6 Copenhagen MN 4735; ARV2 625/95, Villa Giulia painter; BA 207251.

7 Pyxides: Adolphseck 66; unattributed; BA 11527 (Eros). Chicago, Smart Gallery 92.125; ARV2/798/147, Euaion painter; BA 209856 (Boreas). Athens 1708; ARV2 833/46, Amphitrite painter; BA 212136 (Poseidon).

8 Paris, Cabinet des médailles 523 ARV2 316/4, proto-Panaitian group; BA 203242.

9 Boston MFA 65.908; painter of London D12; BA 4826.

10 Athènes MN 536 (CC 571); H. Payne, *Necrocorinthia* (Oxford, 1931), no.1004, p. 312; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-painting of the Archaic Period* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 188/63, pl. 72, 1.

11 See, for a more detailed analysis, Lissarrague (2009, 13–41, esp. 17–18).

12 Amphora, New York 2010.147; Paralipomena 57/58ter, group E; BA 350438. Also Bologna 18, unattributed; BA 14388. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 223; ABV 308/77, Swing painter; BA 301557.

13 Amphora, St Petersburg 610; ARV2 18/2 manner of Euphronios; BA

200089.

14 Brussels R296; ARV2 1619, cf. Euphronio; BA 202141.

15 Louvre G107; ARV2 18/1 manner of Euphronios; BA200088.

16 Oxford 278; unattributed; LIMC Ganymedes 20; BA 13263.

17 London E313; ARV2 202/87, Berlin painter; BA201895.

18 Vatican; ARV2 132/12, Berlin painter; BA201821.

19 New York 56.171.38; ARV2 197/3, Berlin painter; BA 201811.

20 Pelike Boston 1973.88; Euthymides; BA 4437.

21 Amphora Wurzburg 508; ARV2 182/5, Kleophrades painter; BA 201658.

22 Pelike, Berlin F2173; ARV2 286/18, Geras painter; BA 202589.

23 Cf. Lissarrague (2013), 131–147 and 284, list 11.

24 Athens 2192; ARV2 863/32, Pistoxenos painter; BA 211360.

25 Munich 1415; unattributed, near Leagros group; CVA Munich 1, pl. 45; BA 4652.

26 Berlin F 1718; ABV 144/5, Exekias; BA310387.

27 Vatican 419; ABV 267/15; BA 320025.

28 Altenburg 222; ABV 268/27; BA 320037.

29 For example Rome, Villa Giulia 50396 (outside: kōmos; inside: Dionysos); New York 20.246 Macron 377 (inside: satyr and maenad; outside: banquet).

30 Tarquinia RC 1118, Paralipomena 378/46bis, Macron; BA 275978. Boston 01.8072; ARV2 461/36, Macron; BA 204718.

31 Munich 2643; ARV2 467/126, Macron; BA 204808 (inside: kōmos; outside: symposion). London market, Sotheby's; BA 3605 (inside: arming; outside: athletes).

32 Munich 2618; ARV2 61/74 Oltos; BA 200510.

33 New York, collection White Levy; ARV2 1650, painter of the Fourteenth Brygos; BA 204333. Shapiro (1994, 42–45), considers the inside of the cup as a successive moment in the narration.

34 Louvre G133; ARV2 460/14, Macron; BA 204695.

35 London E69; ARV2 369/2, Brygos painter; BA203901.

36 Vienna 3695; ARV2 429/26, Douris; BA205070. No inscriptions certifies who is receiving the arms; I believe Odysseus is giving them to Neoptolemos, but this is disputable; cf. Spivey (1994, 44, n.4).

37 Malibu J. Paul Getty Museum 85.AE.481 (ex Bareiss 346); Paralipomena 367/1bis, Brygos painter; BA 275946.

38 Malibu J. Paul Getty Museum 90.AE.35; Triptolemos painter; BA43899. Very fragmentary.

39 Boston 99.518; ABV 198; Painter of the Boston Polyphemos; BA302569.

40 Paris, Louvre F29; ABV 109/21; Lydos; BA310167.

41 Naples 81699; ARV2 189/74; Kleophrades painter; BA201724.

42 Rome, Villa Giulia 121110 (ex Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 84.AE.); BA13363.

43 Bologna, PU270; ARV2192/107; Kleophrades painter; BA201755.

44 Madrid 11265; ARV2 1174/1; Aison; BA16201.

45 Getty 84.AE.974; Kleophrades painter; BA16201.

46 Rome, Villa Giulia 22679; Chigi painter; BA9004217.

47 Florence 4209; ABV 76/1; Kleitias; BA300000.

CHAPTER 16
Displaying Sculpture in Rome

Thea Ravasi

Roman Sculpture and Aesthetics

Ancient authors recurrently engaged with notions of natural and artistic beauty, giving detailed accounts about what they considered worth looking at when assessing the beauty or the ugliness of an art work. However, theories discussing the aesthetics of Roman sculpture were only developed from the eighteenth century, when Johann Joachim Winkelmann published his *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764), in the wake of the works of German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762). By declaring the superiority of Greek over Roman sculpture, Winkelmann influenced enormously the way critics looked at Roman art in the following centuries. Consequently, art historians focused their attention on Roman sculpture merely as a source of information about Greek statuary, developing a field of studies (*Kopienkritik*) that aimed at reconstructing as accurately as possible lost Greek masterpieces from the comparative analysis of ancient sources with surviving Roman copies. The use of casts and photography in the study of Classical sculpture also meant that sculptures, decontextualized and displayed in new settings such as museums and private galleries, soon became the object of purely formal analysis, with no attention given to the social and historical background that led to their production and display. Undoubtedly, comparative studies had the merit of encouraging the development of a history of ancient art, which in its fundamentals is still valid today. In pursuing a purely formal approach to the study of ancient art and establishing the indisputable primacy of Greek over Roman statuary, they conversely hindered the study of Roman sculpture as an autonomous field of research.

Such an approach to the study of Roman sculpture was rejected in the second half of the twentieth century, when sociohistorical approaches to ancient art were gradually introduced into the discipline as a way to understand stylistic patterns as the expression of ancient culture and society (Bianchi Bandinelli 1970), and the semantics of Roman visual language as the expression of complex social and historical issues (P. Zanker 1988). A field of research has developed that focused on problems of identity and status (D'Ambra 1998), gender and sexuality (Kampen 1996; Kolosky Ostrow and Lyons 1997), extending our knowledge of the diverse and multifaceted world of local production and consumption of statues, as thoroughly illustrated by the ever-expanding *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*. Increasing importance has been given to the way Romans looked at their art works, either in the form of

pictorial elements on walls and other media (Stewart 2003), or as part of stunning architectural settings in private and public contexts (Manderscheid 1981; Marvin 1983; Neudecker 1988; Bartman 1991). Attention is also being paid to understanding the perspective of the ancient viewers, which could vary according to their status, gender, and cultural background (Clarke 2003; Elsner 2007).

Looking at the aesthetics of Roman sculpture means considering a vast and changing world with distinctive characteristics, where contacts and exchanges contributed to create a recognizable figurative language, but not necessarily to the generation of common values and ideas. Roman sculptural production developed over a period of more than 10 centuries and across a vast area, populated by people with distinctive cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. Taste and values changed accordingly, differing from region to region, from time to time. Consequently, Roman artistic production encompassed wide and diverse expression, from the artistic creations of the city of Rome, to the art of the provincials, with its distinctive social, historical, and cultural aspects. Statues were produced by artists and workshops with different backgrounds, and style varied enormously according to the final destination and purpose of the sculptures.

Nonetheless, there are at least three key moments in the history of Roman art that have to be taken into account when looking at the development of Roman perceptions of sculpture. The first dates back to the last two centuries of the Roman Republic, when a great number of Greek art works were brought to Rome, following the conquest of Sicily and the eastern Mediterranean. Together with great Classical and Hellenistic art works, looted from cities and sanctuaries or duly provided by Hellenistic dynasts, a great number of sculptors, painters, architects, and intellectuals moved to the new capital of the Mediterranean. The culture of middle and late Hellenism brought by the newcomers offered to the Roman elite a wide array of intellectual options, from the temperate stoicism of Panaetius to suit the austere views of the followers of the traditional *mos maiorum*, to the Epicureanism that responded to the implicit hedonism of the increasing *luxuria*, nuancing Roman reception of visual art with new intellectual and moral issues.

A second landmark in the development of the Roman perception and use of sculpture is to be seen in the Augustan era, when visual art assumed an indisputable role in imperial propaganda (P. Zanker 1988). The new ruler of Rome restricted any form of autonomy of Roman elites: official art set for the first time the visual language for public representation according to a programmatic agenda, clearing the public space of independent forms of visual display. Models elaborated within the context of the imperial entourage were transposed across the empire, through imperial patronage and local euergetism. The importance of the subject as well as the great visibility of the monuments built in honor of the imperial family, which were displayed in the

most important spaces of the city, gave imperial imagery a greater role in shaping local taste and perception of sculptures. As a result, although the visual imagery of the empire developed with local variations according to autonomous and distinctive characters, local tastes and aesthetics were constantly shaped by what had been designed in the center of the empire.

A further phenomenon gradually shaped the way Romans looked at sculptures. During the first two centuries of the imperial age the availability of marble from every part of the empire, the widespread diffusion of artistic workshops, the flourishing of imperial patronage, and a general climate of peace and economic prosperity supported an unprecedented development of sculptural production across the entire Mediterranean. An increasing emphasis was placed on sculptures as parts of complex architectural settings and public monuments such as theaters, *nymphaea*, and baths. This attitude gradually permeated the more private spaces of imperial palaces and villas and extended to the elite residences of Italy and the provinces. Increasingly set within niches, sculptures (and their viewing) thus became an integral part of the architectural planning of a building.

This chapter suggests that ideas about beauty influenced not just the way sculptures were judged and appraised by the Romans but also how sculptures were arranged and displayed within their architectural setting. After drafting a general overview of the aesthetics of Roman sculpture during the early centuries of the empire, the chapter will focus on how aesthetic values shaped the setting and the display of sculptures in Roman imperial residences, exploring in particular the principles that influenced the planning of niches and statue bases at Hadrian's villa, near Rome.

Roman statues were chosen according to their antiquity, their pedigree, or their capacity to evoke historical associations. Subject, size, and shape of a statue were also taken into account when making decisions about its location and disposition. The term *decor*, or appropriateness, which is usually applied to poetry and rhetoric (Cicero, *On Duties* 1.27.97–98 and 1.35.128) as well as to architecture (Vitruvius, *On Architecture* 1.2.1–5), also shaped the way Roman aristocrats chose what sculptures to display and where (Bartman 1991, 74–75). Sculptures were chosen according to their suitability for a building, its role and its final destination: statues of athletes were considered to be appropriate for baths, *palaestrai*, and *gymnasia* while philosophers could properly be displayed in the library of a villa (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 1.5–10). Unsuitable choices were censured and criticized, as was the case of the Alabandines, who proved to lack any sense of appropriateness by putting statues of orators in their city's gymnasium and decorating the forum with athletes (Vit. *On Architecture* 7.5.6).

There is no reason to reject the idea that statues could be appreciated on aesthetic grounds. A Roman patron may have favored a statue for its formal, technical, and expressive qualities much as happens today. The term *decor*

could in fact refer to the aesthetic qualities of a statue, such as its majesty, gesture, and costume. The style of an artistic representation was chosen and was consequently assessed as appropriate or not according to the subject represented. This was not just a matter of private choice, since public bodies such as the Roman Senate or the municipal assemblies gave detailed accounts on how an honorary statue should appear: when the municipal body of Pisa honored Gaius Caesar with a posthumous arch in AD 4, they carefully established the way all statues were to look and how they were to be dressed according to their status and honors (*CIL* XI 1421 = ILS 140).

Taste and aesthetic values changed according to status, gender, region, and chronology. A short letter from Pliny the Younger to his friend Animus Severus illustrates which features an educated member of the order of *equites* of the first century AD took into account when assessing the beauty of a sculpture: size, posture and proportions, the accuracy in the details and its likeness to the original, materials deployed, age, and pedigree (*Letters* 3.6.1–4).

Size and the shape of a statue were relevant to its final display and were carefully related to its importance and location. In public places, the dimensions and position of honorary statues were established by local authorities according to the relevance attributed to the person being honored (Chenault 2012). Nonetheless, the size and shape of a statue also responded to aesthetic principles as statues had to harmonize with their architectural setting. Dimensions also defined the quality of an art work, whether it was colossal (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 34.39–47), or infinitely small (36.43), particularly when it was connected to the quality of its execution (Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 1.20) and the level of accuracy achieved by the artist, sometimes at the risk of his own life (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.* 36.40). The quality of the details in the making of a sculpture was so praised (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist*. 36.43) that Pheidias was celebrated not just for creating monumental statues, such as the Athena Parthenos and the Olympian Zeus, but also for the accuracy of the details on Athena's shield and sandals (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist*. 36.18–19).

In his letter, Pliny gives an overview of the newly purchased sculpture: the nakedness of the statue allows the author to observe the body without concealment. He can now look at the figure in its entirety and appreciate what makes the statue beautiful: its shape and proportions between the parts, which is to say, its *rythmos* and *symmētria*. Measure and proportion had long since been identified with beauty and virtue (Plato, *Philebus* 64.e) and *symmetria* was often recalled as an artistic quality that made a figure beautiful (Xenophon, *Memoirs of Socrates* 3.10.3). The Romans did not have a Latin word for *symmetria* and often preferred to use the Greek term (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist*. 34.65) or a number of other expressions like *commensus*, *commodulatio*, *convenientia*, *constantia*, *commoditas*, *commodus*, *responsus*,

consensus. The term *symmetria* was used to express the existing geometric relationship between the single parts and the whole of a building (Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 1.2.4 and 3.1.1) but it was also a determining feature of the quality of a sculpture (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist*. 34.58). The importance of *symmetria* as a concept persisted throughout the whole imperial age (Philostratus, *Images, Preface*).

In the third century AD Plotinus rejected this traditional view of beauty as symmetry of parts in favor of a new definition of beauty as an idea created and emanated by a Principle (Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.1). In explaining his theory the philosopher recalled a shared view among his contemporaries that helps our understanding of contemporary Roman aesthetics, which embraced ideas about beauty as a unity composed of individual parts that contribute to making the whole beautiful. According to this view, Plotinus objects, the individual parts will not have beauty in themselves but will contribute to making the whole beautiful. But if the whole is beautiful, the individual parts must be beautiful too, as the beautiful whole cannot be made out of ugly parts.

This notion, far from being just an abstract reference to the correspondence between parts of a statue, also echoes the richness and inventiveness of contemporary sculpture. In light of Plotinus's accounts about the views of his contemporaries, one could thus appreciate funerary statues that combined a mature portrait of the deceased with the ideal and youthful body of a divine entity. This phenomenon, particularly popular among the Roman nobility and the wealthy imperial freedmen during the first two centuries of the empire, has been widely investigated (Wrede 1981; D'Ambra 2000), but its aesthetic implications have not been fully considered. A statue of a Roman matron portrayed as Omphale from the Vatican Museums shows a middle-aged woman, with an elaborate hairstyle that allows dating to the Severan age. The body is protected by a *leontē* that covers the lady's head, leaving the figure almost completely naked. The striking contrast between the ideal type of the body, derived from prototypes of late Classical and Hellenistic statues of Venus, and the realism of the portrait has been attributed to the well-known Roman practice of celebrating the moral qualities of the deceased with reference to a divine figure (P. Zanker 1999). Using a metaphor already conceived by Larissa Bonfante, Eve D'Ambra has interpreted the nudity of the statues as a "costume," used to give the resemblance of a divinity to the portrait of the deceased (Bonfante 1989; D'Ambra 1996). This approach has the merit of putting the accent on the unified character of statues with portraits on nude idealized bodies and on the complementarity of their parts, a concept recently recalled by Stewart in his work on heads and bodies in Roman statuary (2003, 56–59). From an aesthetic point of view, the juxtaposition of styles that look so incoherent to modern eyes can thus be appreciated in the light of Plotinus' accounts on contemporary aesthetics. If beauty is a unity composed of beautiful individual parts, then beautiful, but stylistically

different, portions of the body could be prized as part of a complete beautiful figure.

Along with appearance, color also played an important role in Roman perceptions of sculpture. The ancient sources provide a wealth of information about the practice of *lapidem pingere*. In particular they refer to color as the means of giving life to a sculpture (Lucian, *Imagines* 6.27) and also to the practice of further embellishing colored marbles by painting on additional colors and patterns (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.* 35.3). Colors were added to metal, ivory, terracotta, and marble statues, and the latter were often waxed in order to give them a more natural result and a lifelike appearance. Influenced by Winckelmann's notions that saw in white statues an ideal of classicism and by the practice of polishing statues carried out by neoclassical artists, modern scholars have often underestimated the role of polychromy in ancient statuary. In the last 30 years much has been done in order to revise this approach and polychromy is now explored as an essential part of sculpture making and of Roman taste (Bradley 2009b). Polychromy strengthened the legibility of figures and the visibility of some details, providing the viewer with useful code colors that enhanced his or her understanding of the visual message expressed by the statue (Bradley 2009a). But coloring was the result of aesthetic choices too and it is frequently evoked as a defining feature for beauty (Cicero, *Tusculan disputations* 4.31), especially in connection with a statue's likeness to a living figure. Indeed, the use of applied colors as well as of colored marble, so recurrent in imperial statuary, could enhance a statue's resemblance to a real figure, as is the case for the statue of Marsyas of the Capitoline Museums, where the *pavonazzetto* marble was possibly chosen for its evocative likeness to the flesh of the lacerated body of the silenus as if he had just been skinned, in a display of crude realism.

Polychromy also added details to a statue, thus making it more truthful and close to its original model. Fidelity of the sculpted image to the object portrayed (*aletheia*, *verisimilitudo*) was another recurring theme when assessing the beauty of an art work. Expressing his appreciation for the quality of the sculpture he had bought, Pliny the Younger relied on an accurate description of its physical characteristics, which made the sculpture similar to a living figure (Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 3.6.2). The value of an artist was judged by his capacity to reproduce nature and by the adherence of his works to the truth: so the *plastes* Possis was celebrated by Pliny the Elder as the maker of apples and grapes which the very birds could not distinguish from nature (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.* 35.2.155). Similarly Kephisodotos was remembered for his ability to bewilder viewers, who were left wondering whether they were looking at a marble figure or at a real body (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist*. 36.24). The accuracy of artists in gaining a great level of likeness even when risking their own lives was thus recalled as an example of supreme artistic quality (ibid. 36.40).

The Aesthetics of Sculptural Display

The location and context of a statue also held an important place in its viewing and appraisal. Modes of viewing that involved the viewer visually and spatially already characterized Hellenistic art (G. Zanker 2004) and gradually entered the Roman sphere, both in public and private contexts (Drerup 1959; Clarke 1991). While celebrating the quality of Praxiteles's Venus of Cnidus, Pliny the Elder explicitly recalled its location at the center of a small shrine, in order to make the statue visible from all around, because the excellence of the art work made it attractive from any point of view (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist*. 36.21). The position of a statue could also reflect negatively on its appreciation: the lack of a pediment or a base could be a sign of disfavor (ibid. 36.39) and the location of a statue on a high position, as the pediment of the Pantheon of Agrippa, was recalled as an obstacle for the true enjoyment of its artistic qualities (ibid. 36.38).

The underlying principles of sculptural display in the Roman world have been widely discussed, in public (Manderscheid 1981; Marvin 1983; Fejfer 2008) as well as in domestic contexts (Dwyer 1982; Bartman 1991; D'Ambra 1993) and imperial residences (Raeder 1983; Neudecker 1988). Famous art works were usually displayed in remarkable places as a sign of their importance (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.* 34.84). When Tiberius removed the statue of the Apoxyomenos of Lysippus from its original setting in front of the Baths of Agrippa and transported it to his private palace, a public outcry forced him to bring it back where it originally belonged (ibid. 34.62). In public spaces the location of honorary sculptures was carefully chosen by the dedicant and approved by the public council of the city. The placing of sculptures in urban spaces was chosen according to the subject as well as the role and importance of the people portrayed (Fejfer 2008; Chenault 2012). Statues were usually located in proximity to other sculptures or monuments that could enhance their visibility and create meaningful relations, but there is no reason to exclude the possibility that aesthetic choices were also taken into account. For example, statues were accurately displayed in regular rows along porticoes and colonnades and their dimensions were carefully established in order to harmonize with the surrounding space. From the imperial age the diffusion of multistoreyed settings for sculptures such as the *scaenae frontes* of theaters and monumental *nymphaea* progressively integrated freestanding sculpture into architectural settings. In so doing they enhanced the visibility of statues, whose display was planned not just according to their subject but also in relation to aesthetic values, such as symmetry and their dimensional relations with the architectural context.

Aesthetic values also determined the way sculptures were displayed in private contexts: a peaceful villa was considered a more suitable setting than a busy town to fully appraise the aesthetic qualities of a statue (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.* 36.27). Patrons expressed their tastes in the deployment of certain

arrangements of statues. Repetitions of the same statuary type, symmetrical dispositions, and mirror reversals could provoke discussions, comparisons, and appreciation of technical as well as of aesthetic differences between sculptures (Bartman 1988; Gazda 1995). One can reasonably suggest that imperial residences reflected these notions and, indeed, imperial villas and palaces provide plentiful examples of this. At Hadrian's villa in Tivoli, for example, ancient visitors could appreciate two versions of the Pasquino group, the Scylla, the Niobids, the Red Faun, Myron's Discobolus, and the Furietti centaurs, as well as three Sandalenbinder statues (Raeder 1983, 336 n.226). Identical sculptures could be displayed within the same building and mirror reversals be arranged in order to promote comparisons between two or more art works. This is likely to be the case for two almost identical copies of the Athena Vescovali found in the Building with Three Exedras. The statues have similar dimensions and may have been produced in the same workshop, as they share certain technical details, such as the making of separate heads and right arms (Slavazzi 2002, 65–66). On the other hand, the two sculptures differ in some particulars, as the presence of the aegis, and it is likely that the small differences in their appearance could inspire erudite discussions among the emperor's guests.

It is important to remember, however, that being movable objects, especially when of small dimensions, sculptures could be easily relocated from one place to another (Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist*. 34.62). This makes it difficult to reconstruct the ideas that inspired their original disposition even in well-known contexts, such as the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum. Repetitions, mirror reversals, and symmetries in the setting of statues that we find in the archaeological record may only reflect the final stage in a chain of changes that is often impossible to track. Indeed, if we are to understand the notions that underpinned the design of the sculptural display at the beginning of a building project, we can obtain far more accurate information by looking at the architectural settings designed for the sculptures such as niches and masonry plinths, rather than at the sculptures themselves. By looking at these settings we can hope to reconstruct the principles that influenced the way architects and patrons wanted their sculptures to be seen and appreciated.

Water and Sculpture: Multiplicity and Variability in the Setting of the Sculptures in Roman Imperial Residences

Built between AD 117 and 138, Hadrian's villa makes an excellent case study, as its planning heavily relied on niches and masonry plinths in the design of the sculptural decoration, following a common attitude in the late first and second centuries AD. Moreover, despite the fact that it was built over a rather

long timespan and great differences characterized the architectural layout of its buildings, the villa is the result of a distinctive and coherent planning, as the presence of a subterranean carriageway that connected the separate areas of the villa seems to suggest. An extraordinary number of sculptures have also been recovered from the site since the Renaissance (Raeder 1983) that have proved an indispensable resource for reconstructing the decorative programs of the villa as well as its cultural and historical meaning (Raeder 1983; Reggiani 2000; Newby 2002; Mari and Sgalambro 2007).

The setting of sculptures at the villa heavily reflects contemporary attitudes toward the arrangement of statues both in private and public spaces of Rome and Italy: rows of sculptures were displayed in niches lined up within the curved walls of the villa's numerous nymphaea and dining halls or distributed along porticoes and pools. Statues could also be juxtaposed one in front of another, paired in couples or in larger groups, with complex designs as in the Canopus, where alongside the linear display of statues in the semicircular exedra opposing niches were arranged in the long and narrow nymphaeum set in the background. Series of statues were also arranged around the walls of the villa's rotundas, the hot rooms of its thermal complexes and at Roccabruna. Similar arrangements allowed the simultaneous viewing of the sculptures in a rather straightforward and static way.

The arrangement of the sculptural decoration of the villa mirrored nonetheless the complexity and inventiveness of its architectural planning and more elaborate solutions were designed that reveal some of the characteristics of Hadrianic aesthetics of sculptural display. A particular feature of the architecture of the villa is the great emphasis given to water as a meaningful part of the villa's design that is reflected both in the creation of spectacular nymphaea and scenographic water plays, as well as in the pursuit of the aesthetic effects of the mutual combination of water with sculpture, of shadow and light.

The use of water in the creation of architectural scenographies at Hadrian's villa builds on a longstanding tradition. When we look at Roman residences, it is striking to note how deeply sculptures and water were interconnected. Romans loved water and their appreciation of the aesthetic effects of water in their private dwellings filled their letters and poems. Water was part of important architectural features in both public and private spaces: fountains were located in private houses not just for practical purposes but as a part of scenographic settings, in nymphaea, *triclinia*, and gardens. Undoubtedly, the setting of sculptures at the edge of pools and water basins enhanced the mirroring effect that played a meaningful part in the visual appreciation of sculptures in Roman life. Similar displays were common to many residences of the Roman elite, but reached their highest peaks in public settings and in the private residences of the emperors at Rome and in Latium. The villa of Tiberius at Sperlonga fully embodies similar attitudes, as water was used as

the stylistic matrix and connecting element in the design of its reception spaces. The villa was built on the shores of a rocky and rugged coastline. A natural cave facing the sea was then adapted to be used as a monumental setting for the imperial banquets. In front of the cave, an artificial platform surrounded by water as a small island accommodated the emperor and his guests. A cycle of life-size sculptures portraying episodes from the Homeric cycle was placed in the grotto and arranged around the edges and at the center of the pool. While resting on the platform the emperor and his guests could enjoy the view of the colossal sculptures that reflected their images in the water, in a fine display of mirroring effects.

If pools and basins enhanced the mirroring effects of water in a relatively static way, the flow of water generated from fountains disclosed a different mode of watching sculptures. The remains of the so-called Bagni di Livia, a monumental nymphaeum-triclinium built by Nero on the Palatine and destroyed by the fire of AD 64, are a remarkable example of how imperial architects sought to create magnificent vistas, building on the aesthetic effects of water and sculpture interlacing in a monumental setting. Visitors descending the staircases located like the *parodoi* on either side of a *scaenae frons* of a theater, entered a semi-subterranean courtyard where a monumental nymphaeum stood, its backdrop articulated into a series of niches. A waterfall fed the spouts situated behind the *pulpitum*. On the opposite side of the room, the emperor reclined on a bed framed by a niche, under a lavishly decorated pavilion with porphyry columns (Manderscheid 2004). From there, the emperor and his guests enjoyed the sight of a rich display of sculptures arranged into deep niches in close proximity with water running down the steps set against the walls of the fountain.

A similar effect was pursued in the *Coenatio Iovis* of the Domus Flavia, built under Domitian roughly above the Bagni di Livia on the Palatine. The new monumental dining hall was symmetrically divided into three parts, an apsidal hall on the main axis, flanked by two large exedras decorated with niches and large oval fountains. The main dining hall opened on a squared peristyle with an octagonal fountain at the center. It is likely that the emperor dined at the center of the apse at the far end of the hall, surrounded by his guests, and that couches were also placed in the exedras. In light of the actual remains it is difficult to say how sculptures were originally arranged, but it is likely that they decorated the fountains as well as the niches in the exedras of the *Coenatio Iovis*, surrounding the emperor's guests with a rich display of visual imagery, enhanced by the perpetual motion of water.

Despite the marked differences in their architectural layout, the Bagni di Livia and the *Coenatio Iovis* shared similar attitudes regarding the arrangement of water and statues, as in both structures they interacted rather statically with the viewer, who got the best sight of the sculptural display without needing to walk around the buildings.

It is at Hadrian's villa that we see for the first time how the aesthetic effects resulting from the association of water and sculpture are intentionally sought in order to engage the visitor in the uncovering of the visual program displayed within the residence.

The Building with Three Exedras at the villa is a remarkable example of such a dynamic interaction between water, sculpture, and the viewer. The general layout of the building resembles that of the *Coenatio Iovis* on the Palatine, as in both structures two semicircular exedras flanked a central, rectangular hall that opened on an uncovered portico space at the front. But although similar in their plans, the two buildings were conceived to respond to a different logic: the dining hall of the Domus Flavia was placed at the very end of a linear progression that set off from the Aula Regia and concluded in the monumental *triclinium*, where the emperor and his guests rested on their couches. The Building with Three Exedras, however, was designed to conform to notions of motion and dynamism that responded to the role of the building as a monumental passageway joining two separate areas of the villa: the porticus of the Pecile, a massive porticoed area partially built on an artificial platform, and the Nymphaeum-Stadium, an extended garden in the shape of a stadium, with fountains and pavilions, that connected the Building with Three Exedras to the emperor's main residence within the villa, the Building with a Fishpond.

The Building with Three Exedras was organized in the shape of an L, with two groups of rooms that markedly differed in their general layout (Figure 16.1): an innovative setting of four porticoed areas surrounding a central hall on the north–south axis, that gives the name to the building, and a more ordinary covered space divided into smaller rectangular and apsidal rooms on the east–west axis. Although when looking at the plan of the villa the function of the building as a connecting space is pretty straightforward, ancient visitors experienced its spaces in a very different way: while entering the building from the Pecile, visitors could not see anything that hinted at their final destination, as the presence of the rooms located on the east–west axis was concealed by narrow corridors and walls that surrounded the entranceways to the north–south axis of the building. The two main axes of the building were revealed by a visual sequence of framed vistas, but it was only walking along the edifice, moving through an intricate setting of openings interlaced by diverted passageways, that visitors could gradually find their way to the Nymphaeum-Stadium. In this context, sculptures were carefully arranged in order to suggest to people how to move within the building and reach their goal. In the eastern exedra, two wide and deep niches opened around the portico that flanked a small semicircular garden with a square fountain in the middle. The two statue bases still in place suggest that standing sculptures originally stood inside the niches.

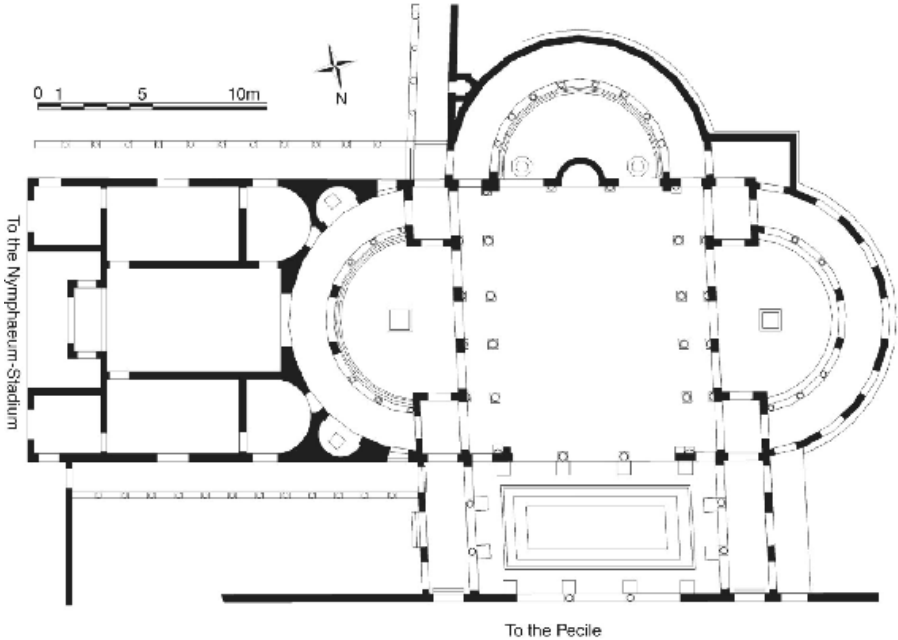

Figure 16.1 Hadrian's villa (Tivoli). Reconstructed plan of the Building with Three Exedras. Redrawn by author from Kähler (1950, tab.9).

Despite the number of windows and openings that characterized the architecture of this part of the building, the columns of the exedra prevented a clear sight of the statues inside the niches. In order to watch the sculptures free from visual interference the spectators had to move to one of the two passageways that connected the hall to the exedra and gaze out of the window opening (Figure 16.2). From there a powerful visual correspondence emerged between the statues in the niches and the water pouring out of the fountain positioned along the same visual axis. The motion of people throughout the Building with Three Exedras and the unveiling of its spaces was thus encouraged through the arrangement of a visual program that built on the aesthetic appreciation of the association of water and sculpture in a new and original way.

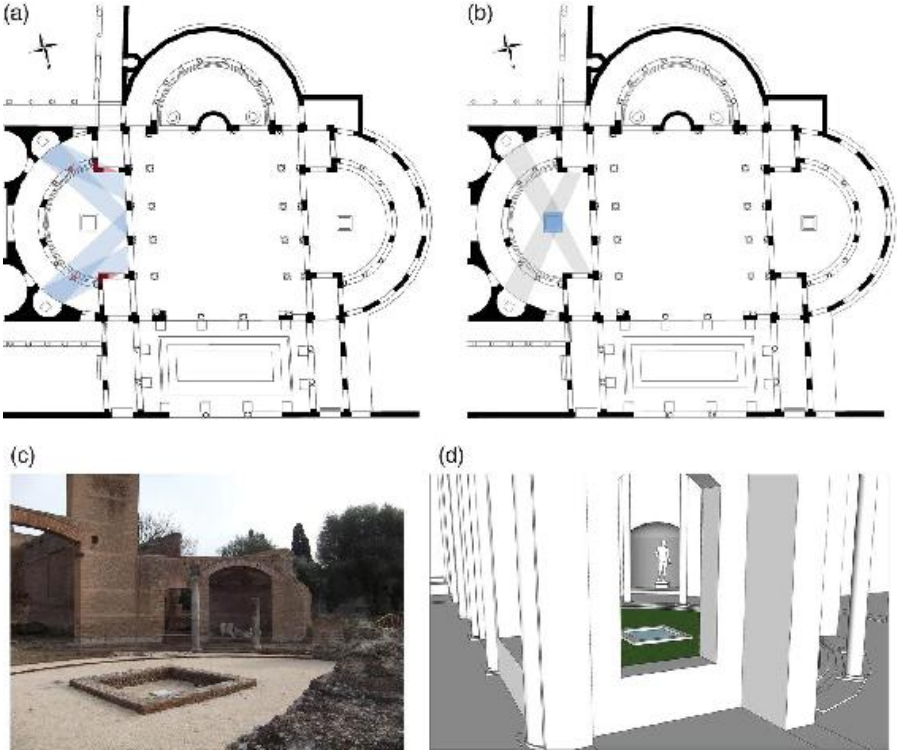

Figure 16.2 Hadrian's villa (Tivoli), Building with Three Exedras. Above: viewing of the sculptures in the niches of the eastern exedra: from (a, c) the wrong and (b, d) the correct position; (c) viewing of the sculpture from the main hall; (d) reconstructed view of a sculpture arranged in the northern niche of the eastern exedra, together with the fountain at the center of the exedra. Drawings and photos by the author.

The pursuit of the aesthetic effects of the combination of water and sculpture emerges even more clearly in the rest of the Building with Three Exedras. As in other parts of the villa, the main area of the building was accessible through lateral entranceways that flanked a larger central opening, which allowed visitors to see the content of the building but prevented them from entering it directly. Approaching the building from the Pecile, a visitor thus stopped at the entrance, where a monumental fountain was arranged, topped by a group of sculptures and surrounded by standing statues displayed on 12 masonry bases. Water poured out from the openings placed on the top of the fountain and flowed over the statues, before falling along its sides. This dazzling vista was enhanced by the light coming from the above opening, while the fountain itself was surrounded by the shady spaces of the two entrance corridors that flanked it, of the portico of the Pecile and of the main hall of the Building with Three Exedras. Given the compact design of the fountain's courtyard and the height of the surrounding rooms, the fountain was illuminated almost exclusively during the central hours of the day, when the vertical rays of the

sun, shining down on the wet statues, created an attractive contrast between the fountain, the sculptures, and the adjoining shady spaces.

Behind the fountain stood the wide central hall, with a semicircular niche at the end of its main axis. Two large windows flanked the niche, allowing the view of the semicircular exedra on the rear side of the hall. In front of the windows, in the small garden at the center of the exedra, stood two octagonal fountains, whose basins were raised at the same level as the base of the niche. Standing in front of the monumental fountain at the entrance of the Building with Three Exedras, the spectator watched the statues irradiated by the light of the sun in front of him, in combination with the sculpture emerging from the shadow of the semicircular niche at the back end of the hall (Figure 16.3). It is likely that the sculptures on the monumental fountain and the statue displayed in the niche shared a thematic or stylistic relationship. Whether or not this was the case, the connection between sculpture and water emerged in a powerful way. This interpenetration of water and sculpture was further emphasized by the presence of the two octagonal fountains adjacent to the niche that created again a sharp contrast between the game of light and motion produced by the flowing of water irradiated by sun and the shady immobility of the sculpture displayed in the niche. We can thus appreciate how the design of the sculptural display of the Building with Three Exedras was planned according to a consistent notion that provided for the association between sculptures and the combination water/light/motion and niche/shadow/stillness. We can only imagine how colors and shapes of sculptures could interplay with this general idea.

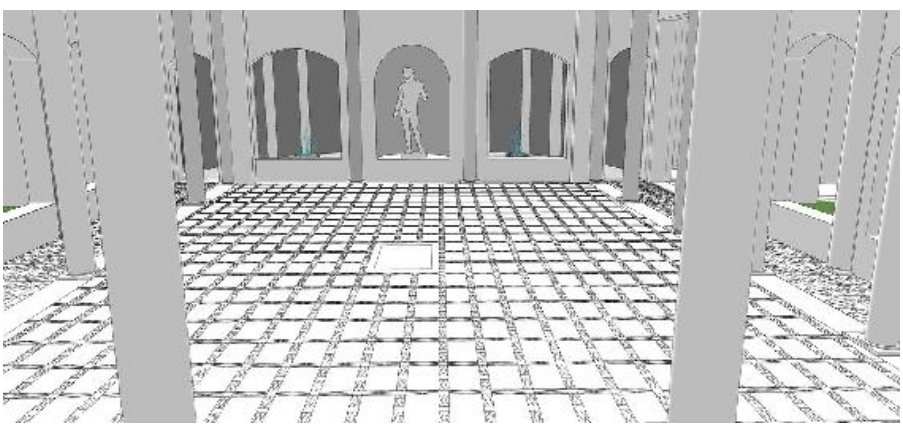

Figure 16.3 Hadrian's villa (Tivoli), Building with Three Exedras. Reconstructed sketch of a niche flanked by two octagonal fountains in the main hall of the building. Drawing by the author.

A similar search for the effects of shadow and light in association with water characterized the setting of sculptures of other structures of the villa, notably the Maritime Theater. The building was extremely innovative and non-

canonical in its conception and has no parallels with any other structure of the villa, but the planning of its sculptural decoration reflected the same notions about the aesthetics of sculptural display that characterized the Building with Three Exedras. The planning of the Maritime Theater revolved around a circular portico delimiting a pool, at the center of which stood a small residence with a central peristyle surrounded by bedrooms, a tablinum, and small baths. Despite the circular shape of the Maritime Theater, a main axis was established by placing a monumental entranceway on one side and a rectangular niche under the portico at the opposite side. A fountain was placed at the center of the peristyle on the island, which marked the geometric center of the building and stood along its visual axis. From the monumental entranceway of the building, a spectator did not have any hint as to how the building developed inside and was encouraged to move toward the opening of the portico and enter it, in order to discover the unusual plan of the Maritime Theater. In doing so, the spectator walked along the main axis of the building, where a visual connection was established between the water of the fountain of the peristyle, irradiated by sun, and the sculpture placed in the niche at the far end of the building, in the shadow of the portico.

Conclusions

Despite the lack in the Roman sources of theories discussing the aesthetics of sculptural display, it is possible to reconstruct the way Romans looked at their statues. If the notion of appropriateness undoubtedly prevailed as one of the main and most powerful elements for assessing a sculpture or a sculptural display, nonetheless ideas about beauty permeated the way Romans viewed their statues. Even though taste and values changed across time and according to people's identity and status, the ancient sources provide invaluable information for our understanding of Roman aesthetics: shape, measure, and proportions, as well as the accuracy in the details, and the fidelity of a statue to the object portrayed were commonly recalled as determining features of the quality of sculptures. The beauty of a statue did not necessarily involve ideas about stylistic consistency as beautiful, although stylistically different portions of a sculpture were valued as part of a whole beautiful figure.

This chapter suggests that, reflecting the increasing popularity of the arrangement of sculptures as part of complex architectural settings, an aesthetics developed that influenced not just the way sculptures were considered per se but also the planning of their display. The designing process of the villa of Hadrian at Tivoli incorporated precise notions about the way sculptures were intended to be seen and valued by their viewers. These ideas embraced the appreciation for the multiple and mirroring effects of water in association with sculpture: water did not just provide a doubled reality but created a fragmentation of images that constantly varied with the changing of light. The multifaceted nature of water, generating reflections and games of

light and motion, was therefore employed to generate new scenographic effects. The aesthetic message expressed by the innovations in the design of the decorative program of the villa went beyond the static approach based on the notions of duplication and symmetry, so clearly embodied in the scenarios of earlier imperial architecture. On the contrary, it focused on the multiplicity and variability expressed by people's mobility, the motion of water, and the varying of light. The aesthetics that directed the design of some of the most inventive buildings of the villa thus referred to balance rather than symmetry, to dynamism rather than stasis. Hadrian's composite and many-sided personality, celebrated by the sources (*varius*, *multiplex*, *multiformis*, *Epitome de Caesaribus*, 14–16) and expressed in the many fields of politics, philosophy, literature, and architecture, was reflected correspondingly in the aesthetics that directed the planning of the sculptural display of his villa, resulting in one of the most outstanding and innovative creations of Roman imperial architecture.

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FURTHER READING

In the past 20 years, great efforts have been put into broadening our understanding of the role of art works in their architectural setting. Researchers have focused on the reception of sculptures in domestic architecture (Neudecker 1988), and more generally on Roman perceptions of decoration in the visual realm of the Roman house (Wallace Hadrill 1988; Gazda 1991; Clarke 1991).

Studies on Roman perceptions and responses to statuary in both the public and the private sphere have also broadened the discussion on the perception and modes of engagement of the Roman viewer from the educated male citizen (Stewart 2003) to the perspectives and attitudes of non-elite viewers (Clarke 2003).

The aesthetic values that underpinned Roman appreciation of sculptures and imitation in the arts, with particular reference to the notions of *decorum*, eclecticism, and *phantasia*, have been considered by Helen Perry (2005), while Jaś Elsner has explored the act of viewing in the Greco-Roman world both in texts and in the visual arts, assessing the variety and multiplicity of visualities that the Romans were able to apply to what they looked at (2007).

CHAPTER 17
Perceiving Colors

M. Michela Sassi

Are There Different Ways of Perceiving Colors?

We all live in a colorful world. Color is an essential feature of things as we perceive them with our most precious sense, vision, and thus it is fundamental not only to our knowledge of the outside world, but to our experience of it as well. In fact, amongst the sense qualities color is also the most effective in inducing responses in the pleasant–unpleasant, beautiful–ugly continuum. This makes the realm of color aesthetics a particularly complex one, and, in fact, an understanding of how colors affect people in their everyday *experience* (i.e. aesthetics in Baumgarten's sense) is necessary at a lower, yet basic level, in order to investigate the level of the aesthetic *discourse*, where explicit aesthetic judgments on colors in both worlds, of nature and art, take place. If the field we intend to explore is that of Classical antiquity, such inquiry is even more complicated. I am not only thinking of the well-known fact that the Greeks and Romans did not produce any systematic aesthetic theory, so that we are allowed to reconstruct at best a few general trends through prudently reading a vast set of literary texts, philosophical writings, and art works. With color aesthetics we have to raise a further core issue, namely, whether the Greeks and Romans "lived" colors the way *we* do, with our "modern" sensibility.

A negative answer was indeed given to this question by several scholars and scientists during the nineteenth century, who were attempting to explain some "odd" features of the color vocabulary to be found in the texts of Greek literature (as well as in the Old Testament and the Veda). Goethe led the way in his *Farbenlehre* (1808–1810), where he observed, for example, that the term *xanthos* can cover most shades of yellow, from the shining blond hair of the Homeric heroes to the blaze of fire, and therefore he deduced that the Greeks were not used to distinctly defining the yellow area of the Newtonian spectrum with respect to red, on the one hand, and to blue, on the other. Later on, William Gladstone, the eminent politician and Hellenist, insisted in his *Studies on Homer* (1858) on the idea that Greek color vocabulary displays maximum sensibility to light impressions (think of the word *leukos*, whose root is the same as that of Latin *lux*), as opposed to a quite vague discrimination of the prismatic colors. In particular, Gladstone remarked on the lack of words specifically meaning "blue": in fact, *kyaneos* denotes a dark shade of blue merging into black, whereas *glaukos* denotes a sort of "blue-gray," in which the impression of brightness definitely prevails over the

indication of hue – remember Athena's epithet *glaukopis*, referring to the "gray-gleaming eyes" the goddess shares with her sacred bird, the *glaux*; or that untranslatable word, *porphyreos*, which covers a large range of shades in the red area, but can also trespass onto the blue one, when used for the shining reflections of the sea. All in all, there was enough for Gladstone to conclude that the visual organ of the ancients was still in its infancy, so paving the way for diagnosing the Greeks as blue- and yellow-blind (Schultz 1904). The diagnosis, soon extended to the Romans, although in a lesser degree given the greater precision of the Latin lexicon, would become a lasting *topos*, favored by the post-Darwinian climate of the late nineteenth century. In the following decades, such a conception prompted a host of investigations either on specific writers or on genres of Greek and Latin literature striving to prove that the ancient chromatic categories, "vague" as they are, do not fit in with modern taxonomies.

It may be worth remembering that, according to the well-established trichromatic theory of vision, which was first proposed by the English physician Thomas Young at the very beginning of the nineteenth century and elaborated by Hermann von Helmholtz half a century later, there are three types of cones (the photoreceptors, owing their name to their shape, that are specifically responsible for the vision of colors and details), which are preferentially sensitive to the blue, green, and red regions of the chromatic spectrum, that is, to the short, medium, and long wavelengths of light. This model can explain various kinds of color vision deficiency, or Daltonism, through dysfunctionality of one or more sets of cones, the most severe defectiveness of them causing total inability to see colors (people with complete achromatopsia must rely on their rods, the photoreceptors specialized for night vision). Today we know that cone disorders are caused either by accidental damage to the individual's retina, optical nerve, or brain (as was the case for the painter who became color-blind, famously described by Oliver Sacks; Sacks and Wassermann 1987) or by inherited diseases, whose spread rates inside a given group are determined by genetic mechanisms (remember the color-blind population of the Micronesian atoll of Pingelap that has been studied, again, by Sacks 1997). These are, however, pathological variations of the color vision capability humans have had since they have evolved. It seems that only primates, and not all of them, have trichromatic vision, which must have obvious selective advantages in allowing better recognition of predators, food, and mates, and no one would think today that there has been a stage in the history of humanity when some colors were "not yet" perceived.

In any case, throughout the twentieth century the developmental account of color categorization gradually yielded to an approach more suitable to the anthropological paradigm of the time. To jump to the end of this story, which, while fascinating, is too complex to be included here (Sassi 1994, 2003), the

common view held by the scholarship on color vision today is that every culture has its own way to name and categorize colors, which is not determined by the anatomical structure of the human eye (which is uniform), but by the fact that different ocular areas are stimulated, and do trigger different emotional responses, according to different *cultural* contexts. In short, humans cross-culturally tend to react differently to different wavelengths. There was, however, a grain of truth in the old view, inasmuch as the processing of sense data, if not the quality of the perception itself, seems indeed to have had a development through time in the various cultures, as I am going to argue by introducing a notion drawn from modern optical research. According to the most widely used color system, elaborated at the end of the nineteenth century by Albert Henry Munsell, an American artist, any color sensation is defined by three interacting aspects: the *hue*, determined by the position in the Newtonian spectrum, by which we discriminate one color from another; the *value* or lightness, ranging from white to black; and the *chroma*, corresponding to the purity or saturation of the color, depending on the distribution of the wavelengths (fire red and sky blue, for example, are highly saturated, whereas gray, white, and black are not at all so; artificial colors tend today to be more intense than natural ones, thanks to the modern chemical pigments and coloring techniques). This model can be extremely helpful for understanding, among other things, the specific ways in which every culture segments the huge range of possible combinations of the three dimensions (more than seven million have been calculated) by privileging one or another aspect. Interestingly, assuming the three-dimensionality of chromatic sensation seems to have allowed diachrony to be restored to the picture. In this connection, Marshall Sahlins made the important point that the linguistic definition of hue tends to proceed by a speed proportionate to the saliency of the color, namely, to its capacity to catch visual attention, so that red, the most salient color, is generally the first to be defined as hue, followed by yellow, green, and, at a greater distance, blue. On the contrary, green and blue, being less salient colors, are usually perceived as brightness before being (slowly) focused as hues (Sahlins 1976).

As far as antiquity is concerned, the Munsell model proved fruitful a few decades ago in the seminal work of Eleanor Irwin, which can be seen as a turning point in the scholarship on the subject. Irwin offered, also through analogies with other cultures, the first plausible explanation of the puzzling fluidity of Greek color vocabulary, tracing the remarkable predilection of Greek poetry for notations of brightness and emotional resonance of colors (think, again, of the warm reflections of the *xanthos* hair, or the alarming light of the *glaukos* eye) to the fact that the Greeks *saw* colors in degrees of light and darkness rather than in terms of hue (Irwin 1974). This claim, which I think may be extended with the proper qualifications to the whole body of Greek and Latin literature, is one of the two assumptions steering my inquiry. My second assumption is taken from Mark Bradley's recent book *Colour and*

Meaning in Ancient Rome (2009), whose central argument is that Roman perception of colors is not so much influenced by light and luminosity as by ontology, namely, by the notion of color as an inherent property of an object. In this view, color was to the Romans a basic unit of information and understanding of their social world, so the meaning of a color qualification is primarily conditioned by the ethical values assigned to the object it is most often linked to – hence, for instance, the versatility of *purpureus*, determined by the social and economic features of purple dye and its associations with luxury and decadence, the freshness connoted by *viridis*, thanks to its connection with vegetation, or the preference for the natural body color over cosmetic embellishments, which is central to the moral debate on distinguishing the true from the fake (Bradley 2009). In short, I assume the visual propensity to luminosity values and the social role of color in the communicative strategies as two parameters that, far from being mutually exclusive, have to be joined in understanding the issue of ancient color aesthetics.

The Bright World of the Philosophers

Let us make a fresh start, observing that the notion of color as an inherent property of the object is indeed a universally widespread pre-theoretical notion (Sassi 2009), and, not surprisingly, it was shared by the ancient Greeks as well. In fact, the Greek word *chroa/chroia* means both the colored surface of a thing and the color itself, and is significantly related to *chrōs*, which means "skin" and "skin color," with connotations of vigor and youth when applied to the bright Homeric heroes (Carastro 2009a). C*hrōs* notably occurs with the sense of "color" in Parmenides' Fr. 8, where "changing place and altering in bright color [*chroa phanon ameibein*]" are mentioned among the characteristics mortals ascribe to reality, "trusting them to be true" (28 B 8.39–41 Diels-Kranz). One can find in this text, where color first appears in a philosophical writing, two features which would remain constant in ancient reflections, namely, the emphasis on brilliance with its power to catch the eyes, and the suspicion that color may be, or, worse, be exploited as, a deceitful covering of the truth.

The ambiguity of color is shown, for instance, in Empedocles' Fr. 23, where the mixing by Love and Strife of the four roots that build the sensible world is famously compared to the work painters do when mixing a limited number of different pigments (*polychroa pharmaka*) in variable proportions, so as to be able to create likenesses of all things, be they trees, men and women, animals, or gods. It has been argued that the term *pharmakon* hints at a magical procedure, so implying that the human mind can be deceived (*apatē*, v. 9) as much by the appearance of natural bodies as by painted images, given that in both cases the basic elements of the composition are concealed (Skarsouli 2009). The splendor effect was likely to take part in this process, for the

production of all the different colors is due, according to Empedocles' account, to the mixture of two elements, fire and water, which correspond respectively to white (light) and black (darkness), considered as the two extremes in the chromatic continuum (Ierodiakonou 2005). Incidentally, it is also noteworthy that in all ancient theories white and black are considered to be colors, often primary or among the primary, while we have learnt from Newton that white light arises from the sum of all the hues of the spectrum, whereas black is its absence. In any case, the aspect of deception would emerge again in the parallel Gorgias establishes in the *Encomium of Helen* between the enchanting power of *logos* and the strong emotional impact that both the colored compositions of pictures and statues may have (82 B11.17–18 Diels-Kranz) – I wonder whether Gorgias may be thinking of statues too as colored (about which see below).

One can guess that Democritus, while appreciating the pleasure given by beautiful sights, gave instead a rather neutral judgment of it. While we cannot unfortunately figure out what Democritus had to say on painting and perspective in the writings he devoted to those subjects, we are well informed, thanks to Theophrastus' *De sensibus*, about the content of his writing in *On Colors*. We are told that he made the nature of colors dependent on the interaction between daylight and the microphysical structure of objects, which means that he was considering brilliance a factor as important as hue for defining colors. Moreover, in explaining the various colors as mixtures of a basic set of four (white, black, red, and green), or as mixtures of the primary mixtures, he considered the mixture of red and white (corresponding to the golden and copper color) plus a small amount of green to give "the most beautiful color" (*to kalliston chrōma*). While it is difficult to identify what kinds of objects Democritus was thinking of, he is expressing here an unquestionable aesthetic preference for the attuning of black and white, corresponding to the minimum and the maximum degree of light, the little touch of green adding a sense of freshness and life. Also, significantly, the third primary mixture in the list, the color purple, is said to "appear delightful" (*hēdu phainesthai*), as it comes from white, black, and red, the presence of white being indicated by its brilliance and luminosity (*to lampron kai diaughes*; Theophr. *De sens.* 76–77, in 68 A 135 Diels-Kranz).

The same appreciation of brilliance is found in Plato, whose account of vision in the *Timaeus* (45b–e) is centered on the interacting of three factors, namely, the fire internal to the observer's eye, the daylight, and the "flame" (that is, again, the light) transmitted by the colored objects (it is noteworthy that both notions of visual ray and sensible emanation are borrowed from Empedocles, as *Meno*, 76c–d shows). So color vision depends on the eyes (then the soul) being affected by a luminous complex, whose impression changes according to the quality of external light and the quantity of fire included in the composition of the natural bodies. It is no wonder that the fourth basic color

in Plato's list, which includes white, black, and red, is the "brilliant" and "shining" (*lampron te kai stilbon*, *Tim.* 68a), which is not a color at all to us – the people of Sacks's island excepted.

Plato also speculates that the purer (more saturated, in our terms) and more brilliant the colors, the purer the pleasures they give to our senses (purity being determined in both cases by unmixing, respectively with other colors or with pains: *Philebus* 51a–53c, 59c), yet he assumes that perfect colors (like pleasures) are not within reach of ordinary experience, as he makes clear in the *Phaedo*, vividly describing the "real earth," situated in the pure heaven, with such colors as purple, golden, white, which are there "brighter and purer" (*lamproterōn kai katharōterōn*), and "more beautiful" than those we see (and the painters employ) in the hollows where we live, amidst water, mist, and air (109b–110d, esp. 110c; the descriptions of heaven and the spindle of Necessity in the *Republic*, 616b–617b, and of the walls of ancient Atlantis in the *Critias*, 116a–c, should be mentioned as well in this connection). Plato's distrust of worldly colors extends, of course, to those used in painting, which are "samples" or "illustrations" (*deigmata*) of the heavenly ones (*Phaed.* 110b) – the allusion to painters working here as a metaphor for the phenomenal world, as in Empedocles' Fr. 23, yet with a more disparaging tone, due to Plato's general emphasis on the dangerous power art has of stirring people's emotions, and of seducing them into a false vision of reality (Keuls 1978; Baj 2009).

A direct thread joins Plotinus, "the most important thinker on light and colour in late Antiquity" (Gage 1993, 26), to Plato's reflections on light and color. Plotinus identifies Beauty with the One, which is often described as Light (*Enneads* V 3.12, 17), and thinks that the One's light is held within the Intellect, where it is fragmented into multiple unities (the Forms). Differently from Plato and most ancient theorists, Plotinus considers light to be an incorporeal power, and colors to be modes or reflections of the intelligible light fallen into the darkness of matter (*Enn.* II 4.5, IV 4.29, IV 5.7). On the other hand, he follows the *Timaeus* model in stressing the role of light within the eye in color vision (*Enn.* V 5.7), and the *Philebus* in expressing his preference for "simple" colors, where light shines most brightly. While Plotinus' personal top list includes in fact lights rather than colors (namely, gold, lightning, fire, and the stars: *Enn.* I 6.3), his view clearly develops Plato's emphasis on brilliance as an aspect of color. It may be more surprising to find a similar emphasis, in a quite different metaphysical frame, in Aristotle.

Aristotle shares indeed Plato's predilection for "pure" and brilliant colors. In the chapter he devotes to color in the *De sensu*, he first argues that the various colors arise from different proportions in the mixtures of white and black, these corresponding to fire and water in the bodies and determining the transparent medium as light and darkness respectively; then he specifies that

purple (*halourgon*) and red (*phoinikoun*), being produced by ratios which are "uncomplicated," namely, easily translatable into numbers, are "the most attractive [*ta hēdista*]" (Arist. *De sens.* 3.439b 32–440a 6). It is of major interest to us that Aristotle attempts here to apply to colors (and next, ch. 4, to flavors) the mathematical treatment which had been successfully used for music: a path Newton too followed in adding indigo to the set of colors more visible in the spectrum, so that they would be seven just like the musical notes.

It is not too daring a guess that Aristotle (not unlike Newton perhaps) was driven to this approach, beyond his willingness to apply mathematics to natural science (Sorabji 1972), by some acquaintance with synesthesia, namely, the sensory (and particularly emotion-loaded) experience of two or more senses being simultaneously activated and intertwining, so that, for example, one may hear a sound and mentally see a color or a shape; or, most commonly, one sense is expressed in terms of another (e.g. by defining a sound "bright"). Aristotle was indeed aware that different senses cooperate in perceiving a given object as a whole complex of qualities, an essential cognitive activity he traced back to a specific psychological faculty he named a "sensation in common" (*aisthēsis koinē*, cf. Arist. *De anima* III 2, 426b 8–427a 14, *De sens*. 7, 449a 14–20). A more direct clue may be offered, however, by the fact that linguistic expressions of a sort of "synesthetic consciousness," close as they are to metaphors, are quite frequent in Greek literature as in many others. For instance, the adjective *leirioeis/leirios*, "lily-like," can describe both a visual quality (whiteness) and a tactile one (softness), recalling the flower, but also a clear voice, like that of the Muses in Hesiod's *Theogony* 41, since "clearness" is in its turn a synesthetic notion appealing to the senses of sight and touch. Let us note here that "les fleurs sont le lieu par excellence de la synesthesia," as Ribeyrol (2009, 57) puts it, and nicely emerges in the pleading we read in Plutarch (*Quaestiones Convivales* 646B–C) for the use of garlands in the symposia, because of the natural, and thus decent, pleasure colors and scents of flowers allow, unlike the artificial fragrances and dyes coming from the Orient. Incidentally, Plutarch's interest in aesthetical psychology is in itself remarkable (Svoboda 1934). One should recall at least, regarding color, his observation (anticipated, however, in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata*, XXXI 19) that eyes irritated by "painful" colors may take rest "by mixing shadow to them" or by looking at green and pleasant things (*De exilio* 599F–600A, *De tranquillitate animi* 469A) – remember also that in antiquity green used to be endowed with positive, even curative properties, not least owing to its association to thriving vegetation (Trinquier 2002).

A phenomenon I would like to mention next to synesthesia is the strict relation the sensations of brightness and of movement display in the visual process. A number of Greek words convey, indeed, a combined sense of

brightness and movement: for instance, *aiolos* (which can describe both a "shining" surface and a "flashing" movement), *argos* (which can be used of bird feathers or of lightning), *amarugma/amarugē* (Irwin 1974, 205–216). This is also one among the reasons for the high appreciation of purple in antiquity. The very name of *porphura* is related to *porphurō*, meaning "swirling" besides "growing/dying purple," and recalling the technology of the production of purple in the ancient world: more dyes from yellow to scarlet red to blue-violet were obtained from the juice secreted by many species of murex, by mixing them with each other and stopping the photochemical exposure (or the boiling) at certain points (this also explains why the dye was considered particularly valuable, especially in the varieties of red and purple, as they were obtained with undiluted juice, of which one mollusk provided just a few drops). What is more, the several hue changes occurring in the dyeing process would determine the final effect of purple, which was seen shimmering under the light rays, with a side effect of movement. This effect is well caught in the lively analogy with dyeing that Aristotle introduces in the scientific discussion on color contrast in the rainbow (*Meteorologica* III 4.375a 22–28; tr. H.D.P. Lee):

> The same effect can also be seen in dyes: for there is an indescribable difference in the appearance of the colours in woven and embroidered materials when they are differently arranged; for instance, purple is quite different on a white or a black background, and variations of light can make a similar difference. So embroiderers say they often make mistakes in their colours when they work by lamplight, picking out one colour in mistake for another.

Yet the most brilliant literary report on the purple effect, which deserves to be quoted at some length, is likely found in Philostratus the Elder, describing a painting scene with hunters, whose leader catches the eye by his rushing in golden-and-purple guise (*Imagines* I 28.4 tr. A. Fairbanks, modified in a few points):

> … and [his horse, white and black-headed] has golden trappings, and a bridle of Median scarlet; for this colour flashes on the gold as fired stones would. The youth's garment is a chlamys bellying out in the wind; the colour is the sea-purple which the Phoenicians love, and it should be prized above other purple-dyes; for though it seems to be dark it gains a peculiar beauty from the sun and is infused with the brilliancy of the sun's warmth. And from shame of exposing himself unclad to those about him he wears a sleeved chiton of purple […] He smiles, and his eye flashes, and he wears his hair long, but not long enough to shade his eyes when the wind shall throw it into disorder.

In ancient literary descriptions, some things stand out for being versicolored on their own. This is the case, for instance, for the sea, whose color is

changing par excellence, which explains, among other things, why it is often strikingly described, starting with Homer, with such different terms as *porphyreos*, *ioeides*, *glaukos*, *polios*, *oinops*, *melas*, *kuaneos* (Ferrini 1999–2000; Christol 2002). The Greek adjectives *glaukos* and *kuanous* and the Latin *caeruleus* cannot be directly translated into our category of "blue," not only because this color is slowly focused as hue because of its poor salience, as explained above, but also because of their prototypical association to the sea, whose unstable appearance and fearful resonances they tend to evoke even when qualifying other objects (Stewart 2006). Interestingly, this situation has such different outcomes as, in poetry, the glamorous description of the sea by that great admirer of the *spectacula* of nature, Lucretius (*De rerum natura* II 763–775), and, in the philosophical debate on the reliability of perception, the use of sea color as a proof of the fallacy of vision (cf. Cicero, *Academica Priora* II 105, commented on by Romano 2003). Another case is that of the colors of feathers in the neck of a dove or the tail of a peacock, whose changing according to the different angles from which light is reflected is a frequent spur to such vivid descriptions as that supporting Lucretius' emphasis on the role of light rays in the perception of color, influenced by the atomistic paradigm (*De rerum nat.* II 795–809, see also IV 72–89), or that enhancing Lucian's *ekphrasis* in the *De domo* 11.

Nature Does It Better

Since human beings pay great attention to their own complexions, a key aspect of how they look to others, cosmetic treatments have always focused on the color of the face, and the very word *chrōs*, meaning both "color" and "skin," can remind us that Greeks are no exception. In fact, the contrast between the pale complexion of women, due to their living in the darkness of the domestic sphere, and the highly colored skin typical of men, tanned and strengthened by physical exertion and outdoor sports, is an essential part of the ancient social hierarchy of values, which derives its force from being presented as a fact of nature (Sassi 2001, 1–11). This is also the reason why any artificial means aimed at correcting the natural/social code, being artificial, was to be rejected, and the application of cosmetics was equated with concealment and deceit, the exact opposite of the natural beauty associated with moral well-being. An honest bourgeois such as Xenophon makes very clear on two occasions that makeup, and also perfumes and luxury fabrics, are unworthy of a free woman. In the episode of Heracles at the crossroads, for instance, the woman who symbolizes virtue is "beautiful and of noble mien, her body adorned with purity, with downcast eyes, modest expression, dressed in white," while her counterpart (vice) is "fat and soft, and so made up as to seem *unnaturally* red and with high-heeled shoes so as to appear taller than nature *had made her*" (*Memorabilia* II 1.22). Taking a more concrete stance, the rich landowner Ischomachus, who is Socrates'

interlocutor in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, does not tolerate seeing his wife "much enamelled with white lead, no doubt to enhance the natural whiteness of her skin … rouged with alkanet profusely, doubtless to give more colour to her cheeks than truth would warrant." He dissuades her from this practice by appealing to an ideal of authenticity: if she wants to be "truly beautiful," not just "apparently" so, she should not sit about like a slave, but be active and oversee the running of the household. This exercise will whet her appetite, she will feel better and her complexion will be healthy, unlike those women who do nothing but sit around applying makeup and making trouble (Xenoph. *Oeconomicus* VII 21ff., 33). Even more famous is the passage in the *Gorgias* (465b) where Plato describes cosmetics as deceitful, wicked, despicable, "unworthy of a free man," as they produce an "unnatural [or alien: *allotrion*] beauty," the exact opposite of the natural beauty of a body shaped by gymnastic exercise. In remarks on cosmetics focused specifically on men, Plato also deplores the dissimulation that the effeminate man seeks to achieve. By neglecting physical effort and masculine exertion, he ends up with a pallid complexion, contrary to men's "natural beauty," which he attempts to cover up with "alien" hues (*Phaedrus* 239c–d). In short, whether they are women or effeminate men, those who titivate themselves do so in order to be seductive, and the more blatant their makeup, the more shameless their behavior.

Even outside the "anti-cosmetic" trend (whose interesting outcomes in Roman moral thought have been studied in depth by Bradley 2009), the view that colors found in nature are "more beautiful" than artificial ones is common, and it supports the notion that painters must aim at imitating the natural aspect of things (not, however, to the point that the divide between reality and representation be canceled, owing to the notorious ambivalence of the ancient concept of *mimēsis*). Hence the frequent insistence on painters' need to apply the most appropriate colors, mainly when portraying human countenance, since one's *ēthos* and emotions show through his or her complexion and the eyes (Plato, *Cratylus* 424d–e, 432b–c; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* III 10.1–8; [Aristoteles], *De mundo* 396b 11–15; Aristides, Quintilianus, *De musica* III, VIII, p. 15f.; Plutarchus, *Cimon* II 3, *Alexander* I 3, *De Alexandri fortuna* 335B, *Quaest. conv.* I 2. 618A–B; Philostratus, *Imagines* I 2). Plato's remark in the *Republic* (420c–d) that a statue's most beautiful parts (e.g. eyes), have to be painted not "the most beautiful colors" (e.g. purple), but "the most appropriate ones" (e.g. black) does confirm this realistic approach, in terms that Lucian would resume in one of his writings of art criticism (*Imagines* 6–8). The same assumption underlies a penetrating thought ascribed to Sophocles in a lively episode Athenaeus tells, whose source is claimed to be Ion of Chios (*Deipnosophistae* 603F–604A). Sophocles, excited during a symposium by the sight of a handsome cupbearer blushing from modesty, quotes a Phrynichus verse praising one's "purple cheeks, where eros shines" (fr. 13 Nauck). As a pedantic schoolteacher objects that the cheeks of the boy would not appear that beautiful if painted purple in a portrait, Sophocles

replies just reminding him of such further poetical expressions as the "purple lips" of a Simonides' girl (fr. 585 Page), the epithet of Apollo "golden-haired" (a painter should paint the god's hair black to get a better result), and finally the Homeric image of "rosy-fingered" Eos, which does certainly not imply that real people having such fingers would be appreciated, as these are more appropriate to a dyer than to a beautiful woman. We understand that the painters' use of colors is bound by a principle of "literal" representation, while poets can use every available metaphor. Painters had, however, their proper means and skills. Noteworthy is the case of a bronze statue of Jocasta that Plutarch mentions, in discussing the issue of how we may take pleasure in painful representations: the artist added silver to her face to give the appearance of a dying person, giving pleasure to the observers and eliciting their admiration (Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* V 1, 674A; see also Philostr. *Imag.* I 2, giving credit to painters for the possibility they have, unlike sculptors, to render a person's *ēthos* through coloring, and thus giving a particular light to, his or her eyes).

Color was furthermore perceived, both in the animated world and in painting, as an indicator of vitality and vigor. Let us consider Aristotle's account of the embryo's development in the *De generatione animalium* (II 6.743b 18–25, tr. A.L. Peck, with modifications):

> The upper portion of the body is the first to be marked off in the course of the embryo's formation; the lower portion receives its growth as time goes on. (This applies to the blooded animals.) In the early stages the parts are all traced out in outline [*tais perigraphais*]; later on they get their various colours [*ta chrōmata*] and softnesses and hardnesses, quite as if a painter were at work on them, the painter being nature. Painters, as we know, first of all outline [*hupograpsantes tais grammais*] the figure of the animal and after that go on to apply [*enaleiphousi*)] the colors.

In a few further passages of his biological writings, Aristotle interestingly compares the blood vessels, to which flesh is applied as to a framework (*peri hupographēn*), to the lines of the wooden skeletons (*kanaboi*) used in modeling (*Gen. anim.* II 6.743a 1–2, IV 1.764b 30–32; *Hist. anim.* III 5.515a34–b 7). These analogies are aimed at explaining how nature works, in accordance with Aristotle's idea that the teleological processes of human *technē* imitate the profound teleology present in nature, at the same time making it more visible. What is more visible in painting, so as to be used for explaining the embryo's growth, is how the pair line–color works: line provides first the essential features of image, then comes color to add "flesh" and the beauty of life. Nobody could deny that color has this advantage over line. Plato himself had to admit that pictures of living beings need colors to give them that clearness (*enargeia*) that the mere outline (*perigraphē*) is unable to do (*Politicus* 277c). In fact, as Plutarch would sum up, color owes both its major power of stirring emotions (*kinetikōteron esti*) and its

dangerous deceptiveness (*apatēlon*) to its being lifelike (*andreikelon*: *De audiendis poetis*, 16B).

In fact, which element of the couple is to be judged "better" is an eternal issue in the history of art criticism. Aristotle himself, no less "formalist" than Plato in his aesthetic preferences (Porter 2010, 70–120), famously favors outline pictures in black and white (*leukographia*) for their giving more pleasure than images smeared with colors (*Poetics* 6, 1450a 38–B 2). Moreover, how drawing must have been central to ancient artistic practice is shown, in addition to a few scanty, yet significant, archaeological remains, by the focusing of Roman art discourse on the functional role of line and the plastic properties of color as two opposite virtues, respectively championed by Zeuxis (or Apollodoros of Athens) and Parrhasios (Quintilianus, *Institutio oratoria* XII 10, 4–5; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* XXXV 60, 62, 65, 67–72; Plutarchus, *De gloria Atheniensium* 2, 346A; cf. Settis 2008). Incidentally, it is likely that within the tradition praising outline and drawing the view took form that earlier painters were to be praised for their using simple mixtures of just four colors (white, yellow, red, and black), after which the palette became richer (Cic. *Brutus* XVIII 70; Plin. *Nat. Hist.* XXXV 50). This must be a cultural construction, which does not correspond to what we know about the availability of pigments for the entire range of colors since early times: remember, among other things, the use of blue glass paste on the walls of the Mycenaean palaces (for example, in the famous frieze of Tiryns), or the blue and green traces left on the Korai of the Acropolis. An ideal development in the use of colors, going from Archaic simplicity to later luxuriousness, also underlies the distinction of colors *austeri* and *floridi* we find in Pliny, this reflecting, however, a real event: plenty of new pigments coming from the Orient invaded the Classical world toward the end of the fourth century, and, notorious as these were for their being both expensive and splendid, they became a favored target of the moralists. The discussion on *colores floridi*, however, cannot but be seen as a new expression of the old tradition of disparaging artificial colors in favor of the natural ones.

A different attitude emerges instead from a number of ancient descriptions of the aesthetic effect produced by coloration of statues, pervaded by unqualified emphasis on the brightening and enlivening properties of color. For instance, Euripides' Helen, in blaming her life and beauty, focuses on the wish her colors were canceled as from a statue, so as to lose her charm (*Helen* 260–263).[1] On this subject the literary evidence has recently received striking confirmation from important archaeological reconstructions of ancient sculpture polychromy, tangibly displaying at last that the effect sought, by applying the most brilliant colors, was exactly one of splendor, along with energy, movement, and life (Brinkmann and Wünsche 2004; Brinkmann, Brinkmann, Piening, and Primavesi 2011).

Lightening and Shadowing

Let us pass now from living beings to the sky. When approaching atmospheric colors in the *Meteorologica* (III 2–4), Aristotle assigns to the intermediate air a coloring action, which causes the sun to be seen as red through a dark environment (374b 10–11, cf. 342b 4, 347a 4). This is not the only notion which, while being of minor interest in the psychological writings (*De anima*, *De sensu*), plays a primary role in the optical theory of the meteorological treatise. Aristotle even introduces here the notions of visual ray (*opsis*) and of light reflection (*anaklasis*), which are not at all present in the psychological writings, in order to explain such heavenly phenomena as rainbow, halos, mock suns, and rods appearing beside the sun. Appealing to the subject's vision weakening as distance increases, for example, helps to explain that objects appear darker the farther away they are, because our sight (*opsis*) fails along the way (374b 10–35). Even the colors of the rainbow are determined by the diminishing of our vision according to the angles at which sunlight is reflected through in the atmospheric medium: "When the sight is strong enough the color changes to red [*phoinikoun*], next to green [*prasinon*], and when it is even weaker to purple [*halourgon*]." Aristotle adds that the three colors of the rainbow (notably overlapping the triad of *porphureon phoinikeon chlōron* found in Xenophanes' Fr. 33) are "almost the only ones" painters cannot produce by a mixture (372a 6–11). One may remember that Aristotle claims red and purple to be the "most attractive" colors in the *De sensu* (3.439b 33–440a 1), yet it is even more interesting that in his view red, purple, and green (with dark blue, *kuanoun*) are primary mixtures of white and black, the remaining colors being mixtures of the primary ones (*De sensu* 4.442a 20–25). It seems that Aristotle does not know, or intends to ignore, what we have been used to consider the painters' primary colors, namely the pigments yellow, blue, and red, from whose mixing on the palette all the other colors can be produced. This may be explained through the fact that Aristotle, like the Peripatetic author of the *De coloribus* (2.792b 16–32), is more interested in lights, and thus in an additive synthesis, rather than in hues, whose synthesis is subtractive (of light), and this prevents him from any experimental approach to the color problem (a similar motive may explain both Democritus' and Plato's approach: Struycken 2003). However, it is time to ask whether the palette was a regular tool of ancient painters after all.

In the *De sensu* (3.439b 18–440b 25) Aristotle sets out three "ways" (see *tropos* at 440a 6) in which colors other than white and black arise, namely, (i) through juxtaposition of small particles of white and black, (ii) through superposition upon each other (*epipolasis*), (iii) through chemical mixture. These situations should not be taken, *pace* Sorabji, as mutually exclusive "theories." While arguing that only the third kind of combination produces a genuine mixture, Aristotle does not deny that the first and the second ones can actually occur and produce the impressions he actually describes. Painters, for

instance, are accustomed to overlay (*epaleiphousin*) a given color over a clearer one (*enargesteran*) when they want a thing to appear through water or air, "just like" the sun, while being *leukos*, appears red through fog and smoke (440a 7–12). Aristotle does not specify how colors were actually mixed in the third kind of process (the fusion), and we are not committed to thinking that the mixing was done on a palette rather than directly on the painting support – there is no mention of something like a palette in either Greek or Latin sources. In any case, Aristotle's dwelling over the superposition method may indicate that overlaying of paints was the favorite technique, as various tonalities could be produced and, what is more, light and shade effects could be achieved by superimposing a lightener (white) or a darkener paint (dark blue or black) over another (Bruno 1977; Kakoulli 2009). We can guess that the effect that was aimed at was a sort of *chiaroscuro*, a concept possibly corresponding to Greek *skiagraphia*. S*kiagraphia* is of course blamed by Plato for its producing a deceptive illusion of reality, and Plato says that it is more suitable for representing landscapes than for human figures, owing to its lesser precision (*akribeia*: Plat. *Criti.*107c–d; cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Isaeus* 4). However, painters were not inhibited by this kind of criticism in their work: they knew, not unlike the philosophers, the power color has to give volume and life to the shapes in the painting, yet exploiting that power was their job. The Vergina frescoes on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the comments of several ancient art observers and critics (Plutarch, *De Herodoti malignitate* 863E, *Tranquill. an.* 473F; Lucianus *Zeuxis* 22.5; Longinus *De sublime* XVII 3) are there to prove that *chiaroscuro* prevailed.

Focusing at the start on ancient color *experience*, understood at the primary level of perception and emotional response, may indeed have been a rewarding option. Questions about the Greeks' and Romans' color preferences, the ancient scientific accounts of chromatic vision, and the explicit aesthetic evaluations of colored natural things or artifacts, cannot but be interrelated. After all, color is an essential stuff that life and art are made of.

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FURTHER READING

While the most balanced account of the Greek color terminology remains Irwin (1974), Bradley (2009) provides an up-to-date discussion on the whole issue of ancient color categorization, as well as a comprehensive treatment, historically and anthropologically oriented, of the meaning of color in Roman culture. Since an investigation of color in antiquity requires the analysis of both texts and artifacts by ranging across various fields and methods (those of classical philology, archaeology, history of science, linguistics, and anthropology), the most stimulating approach to the topic is provided by a few collections of articles which make room for the contributions of diverse specialists: Beta and Sassi (2003), Carastro (2009b), and Villard (2002). As particularly regards the field of ancient art history, the discovery of the Vergina frescoes in the last decades of the past century, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the increasing attention to the polychromy of ancient statues and architectural elements (along with some brilliant archaeological reconstructions) have triggered intensive study of Greek painting pigments and techniques, the most notable contributions being the volumes edited by, respectively, Rouveret, Dubel, and Naas (2006) and Brinkmann and Wünsche (2004), as well as Brinkmann, Primavesi, and Hollein (2010).

NOTE

1 Cf. also Eur. TrGF 5, 752C Kannicht; Plat. *Resp.* 420c–d, again; Cherem. TrGF 1, 71 F 1 Snell; Luc. *Imag.* 6–8, again; Primavesi (2004) is a

thorough treatment of the literary sources on the practice of painting statues and the effect of it, while Descamps-Lequime (2006) and Muller-Dufeu (2006) add a number of texts on bronze coloring; Marconi (2011) fruitfully focuses on an Apulian *kratēr* dated to the fourth century, featuring a painter working on a statue.

CHAPTER 18
The Beauties of Architecture

Edmund Thomas

"Beautiful" Buildings

> Should we not mention among magnificent buildings the basilica of Paulus wonderful for its Phrygian columns [or "with columns and Phrygians" (*e[t?] Phrygibus mirabilem*)], the Forum of the deified Augustus, and the Temple of Peace of the Emperor Vespasian Augustus, the most beautiful [*pulcherrima*] buildings the world has ever seen?
>
> Pliny, *Natural History* 36.102

What makes a building beautiful? This is a question which seems to have troubled the ancients as much as it does us today. But is it even the same question for them as for us? What did they mean by "beauty"? What aesthetic principles were used in Classical antiquity to guide appreciation of their surroundings? To what aesthetic objectives did ancient architects strive? And what was the basis of aesthetic judgments on architecture like Pliny's? When the Elder Pliny calls the Basilica Pauli, the Forum of Augustus, and the Temple of Peace the three "most beautiful buildings in the world," he presents the historian of ancient aesthetics with a challenge. His remark sounds like a throwaway statement and one might infer from the lack of critical comment on these much-quoted lines, and in particular on the use of the word *pulcherrima*, that it is usually taken as such.

Most commentators would probably assume that nothing qualifies these buildings for this description better than the suggestion of their imperial patronage, being the work of either Augustus Caesar (which might include the two reconstructions of the basilica dated to his reign) or the new Augustus, Vespasian; and one should perhaps accept that this was true for many contemporaries too; a decade or so later, similar language could have been used for Domitian's new forum, continued by Nerva. It might be supposed that, because Pliny here does nothing more than signal three buildings of political importance or imperial associations, for Romans therefore, or at any rate for the literary and political elite, the question what made a building beautiful was never an aesthetic one. Certainly, modern architectural critics have stressed how aesthetics are intertwined with other issues including cultural and political status (Ballantyne 2002). But this does not mean that to identify a building as "the most beautiful" is down *solely* to political factors. Certainly, Pliny says little specific about the structure or decoration of these

buildings to let us into his aesthetic ideas. But the inclusion of the Basilica Pauli, *Aemilia monumenta* (Tacitus, *Annals* 3.72), alongside the two works of the emperors, still jars against that view, implying that imperial authorship is not the only requirement, and its status as a single building stands out in contrast with the other two, which are enclosed spaces. In fact, as we will see in this chapter, once we consider in detail the principles of Roman architectural aesthetics, there were very real grounds for calling a building beautiful which make this statement of Pliny's not a casual remark, but a deep-seated claim about architectural aesthetics.

The starting point for an understanding of ancient architectural criticism is inevitably Vitruvius' work *On Architecture*, completed up to a hundred years before these buildings were created. Vitruvius famously claims that all buildings should be constructed to take account of stability (*firmitas*), utility (*utilitas*), and attractiveness (*venustas*) (Vitruvius 1.1.3). The last of these is the one that concerns us here. Arguably, it is the one that he says least about. As has been noted in the past (McEwen 2003, 200), Vitruvius never uses the term "beauty" (*pulchritudo*), preferring the more esoteric *venustas*. Already in the previous chapter Vitruvius has given an indication of what he means by this term when he distinguishes the component parts of "Architecture": "Architecture consists of Order [*ordinatio*], which in Greek is named *taxis*, and of Arrangement [*dispositio*], which the Greeks call *diathesis*, and of *eurythmia* and *symmetria* and *decor* and *distributio*, which is named *oeconomia*" (*De arch.* 1.2.1).

Of the six properties he identifies here, three are activities of the architect (*ordinatio*, *dispositio*, and *distributio*), while three concern the aesthetics of the building: *eurythmia*, *symmetria*, and *decor* (Scranton 1974). *Decor*, corresponding to the activity of *distributio*, the logistics and costing of buildings, is the idea of appropriateness, above all that a building should reflect the rank and status of the patron, be it a private house for an individual or a public building for a community; *symmetria*, which corresponds to *ordinatio*, the laying out of a building, is the commensurability of its parts, based on the supposed *symmetria* of the human body (as developed in detail in Vitruvius' third book) with each part planned in a modular way (its dimension being the multiple of a given "module"); and *eurythmia*, corresponding to *dispositio*, the conception of a building in plan, elevation, and perspective, is the visual impression of the completed building on the viewer.

While *symmetria* was certainly central to Vitruvian design (Knell 1991, 30), the most important of this other triad in its contribution to *venustas* was *eurythmia*, the aspect of a building which required adjustment from the prescribed norm of *symmetria* (Wilson-Jones 2000, 43). But, whereas *symmetria* was clearly measurable, *eurythmia* is a notoriously slippery and subjective concept (Ferri 1960, 48); in Greek literature it is used in a wide

variety of contexts, but this is its only appearance in Latin. Vitruvius defines it as "an attractive appearance and agreeable look of the parts in arrangements" (*Eurythmia est venusta species commodusque in compositionibus membrorum aspectus*). A "striving for rhythm and symmetry" allegedly went back to the Early Classical sculptor Pythagoras of Rhegium (D.L. 8.47), who, like his contemporary Myron, *numerosior in arte quam Polyclitus* (Pliny, *NH* 34.58), studied patterns of motion, to produce works like Myron's famous Discobolus and Pythagoras's Philoctetes (Pliny, *NH* 34.59; *Anth. Gr.* 16.112); in the later Classical period the term had the sense of "well-shaped" objects (Xen. *Mem.* 3.10.10–12), but made little impact on contemporary sculpture; however, by the Hellenistic period the idea of *rhythmos* resurfaces in art theory, merged with the notion of *charis*, "grace," to produce in the term *eurythmia* an important new vehicle of art criticism (Schlikker 1940, 72–95). In an architectural context the term is applied by Strabo to the Temple of Artemis Leukophryene at Magnesia, which was considered "inferior to the Artemision at Ephesus in size and number of dedications, but far superior in its art and excellence of rhythm [*eurythmia*] in the construction of the enclosure" (*Geography* 14.1.40, C 647). This temple had a pseudo-dipteral plan and eustyle elevation much admired by Vitruvius (3.3.8–12) and was the work of Hermogenes who published a treatise on the temple (Vitruvius 7 *pr.* 12). The "eustyle" rhythm of its colonnade – with two and a quarter column diameters for each intercolumniation – may explain the use of the term *eurythmia* by Strabo and also Vitruvius' concept of *eurythmia*. Here the word owed much to its interrelated use in other spheres: rhetoric, music and dance, physiognomy, and mathematics. As a term of musical theory, its use by Aristoxenus (*Fragmenta Parisina*, in Pighi 1959, 28) was probably known to Vitruvius, who was familiar with his works, as also perhaps was its application in astronomy and mathematics (later used by Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos* 3.12.7, 12–13). The acquisition of *eurythmia* and *euharmonia* in music was thought to bring benefits for behavior and speech (Pl. *Protag.* 326c). In rhetoric the term was widely used, sometimes also alongside the term *symmetria* (e.g. Isocr. *Evagoras* (9).10); and it is likewise common in physiognomy (cf. Plut. *De liberis educandis* 8c), again sometimes combined with *symmetria* (e.g. Galen, *De sanitate tuenda* in Kühn 6, 327). Somewhat counterintuitively, it is this last, physiognomic aspect of the term that emerges most clearly from Vitruvius' definition of *eurythmia* in architecture. His emphasis on sexual appearance (*venusta species*) as an initial characterization of architectural beauty, and on the "commodious look of the body in the arrangements of its limbs" (*commodus … in compositionibus membrorum aspectus*) – a metaphor that is bound to jar on the reader who at this stage of the work has not yet encountered Vitruvius' explanation of the analogy between buildings and the human body (3.1) – suggests nothing so much as the aesthetics of the dance.[1] Thus the pantomime dance is claimed to be "the most beautiful and most rhythmical [*eurythmotaton*] of all gymnastic exercises" (Lucian, *De*

Saltatione 71). It was this *eurythmia* of the human body, dependent on the idea of "grace" (*charis*) and movement, which became the determinant of beautiful architecture, more important even than *symmetria* for the visual appearance of a building.

Viewing Buildings

In the later fifteenth century Giorgio Valla identified Vitruvius' *eurythmia* with the Latin *concinnitas* (Stimilli 2005 , 143 n.111). The equation of the two terms had already been made in antiquity, but with a rather different meaning. In Pliny's account of the different forms of the ivy plant, which is a close translation of the earlier Greek account of Theophrastus, the Latin word *concinnioraque* is used to render the Greek term *eurythmotera*, applied to the leaves of the helix ivy (Pliny, *NH* 16.148, after Theophr. *HP* 3.18.7). Elsewhere in Theophrastus' text the word *eurythmos* is used of foliage, apparently referring to the well-balanced aspect of the leaf's shape, the rhythm observed in its variegated outline, though perhaps also suggesting the accumulated arrangement of successive leaves together on the plant (*HP* 3.12.9).

When Alberti revived Vitruvius's triad, he formalized the concept of "beauty," elevating it as "the noblest and most necessary [thing] of all" and describing it as "a certain consensus and union of the parts of a thing with regard to definite number, finish and arrangement, as demanded by *concinnitas*, the absolute and primary reason of nature" (*De re aedificatoria* VI, IX.5; cf. Summers 1987).[2] For Alberti, then, *concinnitas* appropriates the characteristics of *eurythmia*, but without any sense of Vitruvius' original metaphor; it was not one of the visual properties of a building, but an overriding rule: "[w]hen you make judgments on beauty, you do not follow mere fancy, but the workings of a reasoning faculty that is inborn in the mind." For Vitruvius and Pliny, however, beauty in architecture, as in the natural world, was not fixed or static. Viewers observed shifting visual effects in architecture just as in nature they saw beauty in the pattern of a leaf, the rays of the sun, the wings of a dove, or a peacock's feathers.

Eurythmia was an aesthetic property, concerned not, like *symmetria*, with the formal characteristics of buildings, but with how they appeared to the passing observer, corresponding to the notion of "view planning" for both individual buildings and the overall urban landscape (Bek 1985, 140; 1993). As Heron of Alexandria wrote,

> the objective of the architect is to make the building *eurythmos* in appearance [*phantasia*] and, as far as possible, to devise remedies against the deceptions of the eyes, aiming not at true equality and *eurythmia*, but at what appears to be so. So, since a cylindrical column would to the eye look broken and narrowing at the middle, he makes it wider at this point, and he

> sometimes draws a circle not as a circle but as an ellipse and a square in a more elongated form and many columns of different sizes he draws in different proportions in number and size.
>
> (*Def.* 135.13)

So Vitruvius continues (3.3.13):

> But on account of the distance in height these adjustments are added to the column diameters to meet the glance of the eye as it rises. For vision follows gracious contours [*venustates*]; and unless we flatter its pleasure [*voluptati*], by proportionate alterations of the modules (so that by adjustment there is added the amount to which it suffers illusion), an uncouth and ungracious [*invenustus*] aspect will be presented to the spectators. As to the welling which is made in the middle of the columns (this among the Greeks is called *entasis*), an illustrated formula will be furnished at the end of the book to show how the entasis may be done in a graceful and appropriate manner.

Reflecting his awareness that buildings are experienced through movement in space, Vitruvius proposed a series of minute optical refinements to improve the viewing of buildings. Many of these techniques had already been used by Classical or earlier Greek architects (Haselberger 1999). Inward or outward inclination of the vertical surfaces, particularly columns (Vitruvius 3.5.4), was employed from at least the early fifth century in Doric temples (Temple of Aphaia, Aegina) and from the end of that century in Ionic buildings (Erechtheion, Athens). *Entasis*, the slight swelling in the outline of column shafts alluded to by Heron and named by Vitruvius, is first attested dramatically in the "cigar-like" columns of the "Basilica" at Paestum, but may even have originated in Ionic architecture (Mertens 1979, 105–106), a scholarly point of controversy known as "the Ionic question." Such refinements reach their peak in the Parthenon (Korres 1996, 72–73). There the upward curvature at the center of the stylobate, designed to ensure its level appearance from a distance, is famously and artfully demonstrated (Balanos 1940). Vitruvius' elusive concept of *scamilli impares*, the means of adjustment of the stylobate and pedestals for a better visual appearance (Gros 1990, 139–146), continued into Roman buildings of the eastern empire, including the north portico of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. The Library of Celsus at Ephesus is also thought to have been designed with optical refinements in mind (Hüber 1984, 175–190).

How buildings were viewed was an important preoccupation of ancient architects and patrons. In 54 BC the architect Cyrus designed a room for Cicero with windows which seemed too narrow to Cicero himself and his friend Atticus, but found support in contemporary optical theory. Cyrus had assured his client, counterintuitively, that "the view of the garden was not so pleasant if the windows were broad" (Cic. *Att.* 2.3.2). Similar aesthetic

concerns governed the layout of contemporary and later houses at Pompeii, with views of select architectural features and objects of *amoenitas* like fountains, shrines, and garden buildings framed within window and door openings or between the columns of colonnades (Drerup 1959). In a letter to his brother Quintus, written in September 54 BC, Cicero shows a notable aesthetic awareness:

> At your Manilian property I found Diphilus even more sluggish than Diphilus usually is. Yet all he had left to do were the baths, the promenade, and the aviary. I like that villa very much, because its paved colonnade has real dignity. This struck me only now that the colonnade is all visible and the columns have been polished. Everything depends upon the stucco being refined [*concinnus*] – and I will make sure this is done properly. The pavements look as if they are being well laid. Some of the ceilings I did not like, and I had them changed. As for the place where I am told you have asked for a small entrance hall to be built – in the colonnade – I liked it better as it is. I did not think there was enough space for an entrance hall; and it is not usual to have one, except in buildings which have a larger court; and it could not have bedrooms and apartments of that kind attached to it. As it is, with its honourable vault, it will serve as an admirable summer room. But, if you disagree, write back as soon as possible. In the bath I have moved the hot chamber to the other end of the dressing-room because, where it was before, its steam-pipe lay directly under the bedrooms. There is a decent-sized bedroom and a high winter one that I admired very much, for they are both spacious and well situated – beside the promenade nearest to the bath. Diphilus had set the columns out of the perpendicular, and not opposite each other. These, of course, he shall take down; one day he will learn to use the plumb-line and measure. On the whole, I hope Diphilus' work will be completed in a few months, for Caesius, who was with me at the time, keeps a very close eye on him.
>
> (Cic. *Ad Q. fr.* 3.1.5)

Of Vitruvius' three aesthetic principles, it is *decor*, "appropriateness," which most stands out in this account, but the other two concepts underlie his opinions. The "dignity" (*dignitas*) of the colonnade is socially fitting, but the perception of such "dignity" may result also from purely visual criteria including that *eurythmia* of arrangement which Strabo admired in the colonnade at Magnesia. Likewise, the description of the vault as *honestus*, "honourable," points obviously to Quintus' social interest in honor (*honor*), but it is also striking that such a feature is considered a focus of visual attention (*admirabilis*). One might see here the impact of technological developments in Roman architecture on aesthetics, just as, at a later date and a more remote place, the bulbous exterior forms of the "Hunting Baths" at Lepcis Magna seem to flaunt an aesthetic preference for the novelty of vaulted architecture (Toynbee, Ward-Perkins, and Fraser 1949).

Cicero's use of the term *concinnus* for the stucco decoration of the colonnade is more complex. The words *cinnus*, *concinnus*, and *concinnare* are metaphors from the sphere of cookery with the sense of "composing from different ingredients." They penetrated into the language of rhetoric without altogether losing their original meaning: *concinnitas* is associated with oratorical rhythm, verbal symmetry, and the phonetic effects of *compositio* as a part of *elocutio*; the word designates a harmony, a balance between the constituent parts of an oratorical period or a clausula (López Moreda 2000). The concept of *concinnitas* is therefore common in writings on rhetoric, where it refers to that neat and closely crafted style produced by the skillful and elegant combination of words and phrases. From Cicero's pen it might be considered a borrowing from the orator's rhetorical language; yet it also makes clear sense in an architectural context as the neat and finely crafted elaboration of materials and fine art. As in rhetoric, so in an architectural context it fits naturally with *venustas*, helping to give a building an attractive allure. The "pretty" or "elegant" stucco decoration, on which the "dignity" of the portico is felt to rest, makes a rhetorical and aesthetic contrast with the severe architecture of the vault, which it no doubt also adorned, as in contemporary architecture from Pompeii, to offer a more attractive surface appearance.

In the absence of an extensive autonomous critical vocabulary, early attempts to evaluate Greek art and architecture naturally followed the language of other spheres, above all of rhetoric and language. In an important article on architectural aesthetics Lise Bek has highlighted the importance of rhetorical terms in the architectural descriptions by Vitruvius and the younger Pliny (Bek 1976). Strongly influenced by the then recent publication of Michael Baxandall's landmark *Giotto and the Orators* (Baxandall 1971), which deconstructed the rhetorical terms used in descriptions of art in the Renaissance, Bek argued that similar terms employed by Roman writers also had little architectural reality, referring simply to rhetorical ideas.

There is much to support this view not just in Pliny's letters on his villas, but also in those from Bithynia on public building. His appeal for *laxitas* and *amplitudo* in the new provincial works of Bithynia owes something to the rhetorical sense of these terms as "expansiveness." But there is also an awareness of the visual quality of beauty (*pulchritudo*). When he derides the ancient temple of Magna Mater in the forum at Nicomedia as "much lower than the very tall structure rising beside it" (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.49.1), he shows the same concern with optical impression that we have observed in Vitruvius and Heron. Even the rhetorical terms *laxitas* and *amplitudo* also have an architectural meaning, harking back to an ideal of spaciousness which, in terms of contemporary architecture, could be considered a distinctive feature of the contemporary Forum of Trajan, with its huge open space and bulging exedras, in contrast to the earlier ones of Augustus, Vespasian, and Nerva. Likewise, when Pliny appeals to the "splendour" (*nitor*) of the Trajanic era

(*Ep.* 10.23.2), the term is not only metaphorical, but refers to the reflective marble surfaces of its buildings.

But not everyone at that time shared his opinion. The treatment of buildings by Tacitus in his work makes an instructive contrast with Pliny's views and is indicative of the variety of responses by individual Romans to their built environment. For both writers, of course, their opinions on architecture should be considered within the constricting literary structures of their respective epistolary and annalistic genres. Buildings were also now deemed worthy subjects of oratory, praised for their "honour, utility, beauty, and author," a combination which overlaps with Vitruvius' three principles (Quintilian 3.7.27). But Tacitus and Pliny were well known to each other and undoubtedly met on several occasions (Griffin 1999, Whitton 2012). As that period from the end of the Flavian period to the reign of Trajan was characterized by substantial new construction work which literally transformed the urban landscape of Rome, and the period from Nero to Hadrian saw some remarkably outspoken views on buildings, in which their outward impression to the viewer is a constant theme, it is quite reasonable to imagine that the new constructions were sometimes the subject of talk between them. On the basis of the strong views on architecture left in their work it is possible to reconstruct the architectural conversation between them.

In view of the importance of rhetorical language as a critical tool to describe architecture, one may surmise from the two writers' views on literary aesthetics that Tacitus and the younger Pliny had different architectural tastes. For Pliny, true "beauty" in rhetoric lay in grandeur and expansiveness of expression. Earlier rhetorical writers contrasted such beauty (*pulchritudo*) with the more precise aesthetic of *concinnitas*: "The pleasure afforded by grandeur and beauty can last for a long time; but the ears soon tire and become sated with the charming and refined" (*Rhet. ad Her.* 1.23.32).[3] Thus, unlike Alberti, for whom *concinnitas* was the overriding quality and a primary requirement for *pulchritudo*, the Roman author separates the two terms; for him, *concinnitas* is an inferior concept. The duality corresponds to the duality in art between grandeur (*megethos*) and precision (*akribeia*), which goes back to the fifth-century competition between Phidias and Polyclitus, where the impact of large-scale sculptures was set against others which instead showed exceptional detail and finesse (De Angelis 1992). In an architectural context the combination of grandeur and beauty can be seen in the tradition, since the Hellenistic age, of recognizing cities for their *megethos kai kallos* (Thomas 2007, 129). At Rome a similar aesthetic would have been visible to Quintilian in the projects of Vespasian and Titus: by contrast with the elegance and craft of their predecessor Nero's Golden House, the Colosseum stood out for the grandeur and beauty of its squared stone masonry.

If Tacitus gives less away about his own responses to the architecture of his reign, that is largely because of his openly negative attitude to construction.

Convinced that it did not suit the dignity of the Roman people to fill historical works with accounts of wooden beams or foundations, he regarded buildings as mere accumulations of materials which served short-term vanities and were always vulnerable to demolition: “if the verdict of posterity is hatred, works piled in stone are despised like tombs” (*Ann.* 4.38). It is not hard to infer from such statements that Tacitus may have reacted rather differently from Pliny to the lavish marble surfaces of contemporary public buildings. Where Tacitus expresses a view on aesthetics, it is in the sphere of rhetoric. Here he adopts a preference for the very *concinnitas* scorned by Quintilian, rather than grandeur and expansiveness. Nothing is known of his private architecture, but if the remains of the funerary inscription are typical of his tomb (Figure 18.1), it shows a simple elegance and precision in the lettering with serifs.

Figure 18.1 Funerary inscription for P. Cornelius Tacitus, circa AD 120–130. Museo Epigrafico, Museo Nazionale Romano delle Terme di Diocleziano, Rome. *CIL* VI.1574 + 41106 = *AE* 1995, 92 = AE 2000, 160: *Ta]cito(?) Ca[---/ --- X]viro stlitib[us iudicandis ---/ --- quaesto]ri Aug(usti) tribun[o plebis ---*.

Photo Kleuske, 2012.

This kind of appreciation of art and architecture is the aesthetic of an elite connoisseur, weighing up the contribution of particular features of domestic architecture to issues of status and power and evaluating them in technical or rhetorical terms. It is rather doubtful that most ancient viewers would have based their perception of public buildings in the city of Rome on concepts like “honor” and “dignity” or on small-scale visual refinements. We should look elsewhere for their answers to the question “What makes a building

beautiful?" Beyond the manual of Vitruvius there were other aesthetic principles which governed notions of beauty to viewers of the architecture of Rome and its empire.

Architecture and the Senses

One way of understanding more general aesthetic enjoyment in architecture is to consider the kinds of features that appealed to the senses, or what Aristotle called "the common perceptible characteristics of human experience" (*De Sensu* 437a9): shape, size, number, and movement (Thomas 2007 , 207–210). The perception of shape undoubtedly lies behind Cicero's perception of the vault as an "honorable" form; the significance of size runs through the awareness of Roman buildings from the Colosseum to the temples at Baalbek; and number was estimated not only in the actual and relative dimensions of architectural features, but also in the optical devices of architects, intended, as Heron indicates, to create illusions of numbers of columns. Indeed, the presence of "countless columns" is a *topos* in Statius' architectural descriptions; in other descriptions it is the number of levels of a building that is not easily counted (Philostratus). Less obvious, but perhaps most important in the perception of attractiveness in architecture, is the final criterion, movement. It was this which lay behind the quality of *eurythmia*, perceived through movement along a colonnade. It was from such perceptions that buildings were considered to be "graceful" or "charming," producing impressions gained only from moving toward, along, or within them.

It was also from movement that observers acquired their most startling impression of buildings, their "brightness" (*lamprotēs*). This too is a rhetorical term (Hermogenes, *Id.* 1.5), but its real significance came from a different context. It was that "brightness" which, in Plato's view, mixed with the color "red" (*erythros*), helped to form the different colors as compounds, distinguishing them on a spectrum between black and white (*Timaeus* 67d) (James 1996, 54). In viewing buildings, though, *lamprotēs* was a distinct quality by itself, representing a "brilliance" that could be achieved by materials such as gold or marble, and was best appreciated at its most intense in direct sunlight. It was this aesthetic, not only captured by "experts" with their critical language but outstandingly evident to all observers, which inspired Nero's use of the stone *phengites*, imported from Cappadocia, with its almost magical capacity to create an enclosed space of perpetual brightness in the Temple of Fortune, brought within his Golden House (Pliny, *NH* 36.163), and Domitian's mirror-like use of the same material in his palace, the Domus Augustana (Suetonius, *Domitian* 14.4), stemming from his Midas-like obsession with gold and marble (Plut. *Poblicola* 15.5). But another manifestation of *lamprotēs* was the impact of rays of daylight cast on marble interiors, as famously in the Pantheon, representing for ancient Romans the highest aesthetic ideal. And it was the same image of visual intensity which

characterized an imagined experience of Alexandria: “Like a flash of lightning, the city’s beauty struck me at once and filled my eyes with pleasure” (Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Cleitophon* 5.1.6). So Aelius Aristides described the acropolis of Pergamum, on top of which stood the marble temple of Trajan, shining in the sun (Figure 18.2), as “like a lightning flash at every approach” (*Or.* 23.14);[4] and, a few years later, at Smyrna he was struck by the city’s “lightning flashes of beauty, numbers and measurements of grand scale, and unities as if of a single structure” (*Or.* 18.3).

Figure 18.2 Pergamon, Mysia (northwestern Asia Minor). View today of the acropolis from below.

Photo Ingo Mehling, May 2011.

The quality of *lamprotēs* encapsulated the changeability of color and the relation between color, light, and aesthetics (Bradley 2009). The movement of light intensified the impact of *poikilia*, the diversity of color that could be seen not only in the combination of different marbles, but even in the brecciated veins of a single marble. The most valued materials were those like onyx and alabaster with their brilliant and complex luminosity, but, since these were both impractical and too expensive for use in general public building, architects resorted to more widely available colored marbles. Particularly prized were Docimian marbles, which were thought to be “almost like alabaster in their variety of colours” (Strabo 12.8.14, C 537).

It was not only the eyes at which ancient buildings were directed. They were also tactile experiences. An appreciation of texture underlies and helps to explain the play with surface, employing different materials to create

distinctive effects. This consideration, for instance, underlies Cicero's positive reaction to the stucco of Quintus' colonnade. Elsewhere, the use of unworked building stones in a "rusticated" effect, notably in lower or exterior facades to contrast with the more finished surfaces of upper storeys or interior facades, was a common way of signaling architectural technique. An aesthetic of prominently rusticated surfaces, notoriously contested with regard to the emperor Claudius' buildings in Rome and Portus (Coates-Stephens 2004, 46), is not only evident in Roman wall painting (Casa dei Grifi on the Palatine), but also has roots in the Greek world since the late Classical period (Lauter 1983). City walls and the basement storeys of other structures are commonly formed of blocks with smooth, "drafted" margins and unworked inner faces, and in other cases wall blocks or column drums are left with rough and irregular faces. Similarly, in literature, while Apuleius appears to denigrate his own rhetorical style by comparing it to a disordered accumulation of unworked stones in a wall without evenness, regularity, or alignment, his vivid evocation of monumental "Cyclopaean" masonry – singled out as an artistic style by Pausanias (2.25.8) – implies artfulness even in its very lack of art (Apul. *De deo Socr.*, pr. 3; cf. *Flor.* 18, with Thomas 2007, 218). By contrast with such rougher surfaces, walls of smooth ashlar masonry showed technical flair as well as grandeur, often with drafted margins around the edges of each block, as in Hadrian's Library in Athens. Even more impressive to the naked eye were surfaces of polished marble. The marble columns and surfaces of the Gate of Hadrian at Antalya stood out between the rusticated stonework of the towers on either side (Figure 18.3).

Figure 18.3 The Gate of Hadrian, Antalya (ancient Attaleia), Pamphylia (southwestern Turkey). View of the exterior, eastern facade.

Photo Ingo Mehling, May 2012.

Within this context it should now be clear on what basis Pliny called those three buildings of imperial Rome "the most beautiful." This was no throwaway remark, but the statement of a particular and widely shared aesthetic. Together the three buildings cumulatively reinforced the aesthetic of the city: before the building of the forum of Domitian/Nerva and the massive intervention of the Forum of Trajan, they formed a unified ensemble around the busy thoroughfare of the Argiletum between the Roman Forum and the upper city of the Subura and Quirinal, an unavoidable zone of access and display (Figure 18.4).[5] One by one, they reinforced the aesthetic: the Forum of Augustus, lined by colonnades and welcoming exedras with columns of African marble and an attic storey with Caryatids imitating the aesthetic height of the Athenian Acropolis; the restored Basilica Aemilia with the *poikilia* of its columns of African and Phrygian marble;[6] but the center of attention was the most modern work, the Temple of Peace, dedicated in AD 75, just two years before the publication of Pliny's own work.[7] The latter was paved with a strip of white Luna marble along its western edge, approached from this thoroughfare by as many as five entrances; the rest of the space had only a floor of beaten earth, but its six long pools of water lined by Gallic roses with Athenian sculptures punctuating the rhythm of the colonnade (Meneghini 2008, 149) made it a point of exceptional aesthetic focus, a *locus amoenus* within the city. Where better to place the visual highpoint of the City and the World? The pools of water, reflecting light, the variegated colors of marble, water channels covered in marble facing, and flanked by rose bushes planted in amphorae, the trees bringing shade and something of the private *horti* into the center of the city, the "temple" at the center fronted by a giant order offering a sublime aspect to the center of the view, the rhythm of the colonnades and statues, but above all the satisfaction of all the perceptual demands of the viewer: the sight of beautiful objects including statuary once secluded in Nero's Golden House and curiosities from Jerusalem;[8] the sound of running waters within the noise of the city; the feel of the coolness of the complex on the body and the tread, first on smooth marble instead of the hard selce of the street outside, and then on the beaten earth of the central space, as if in a garden.

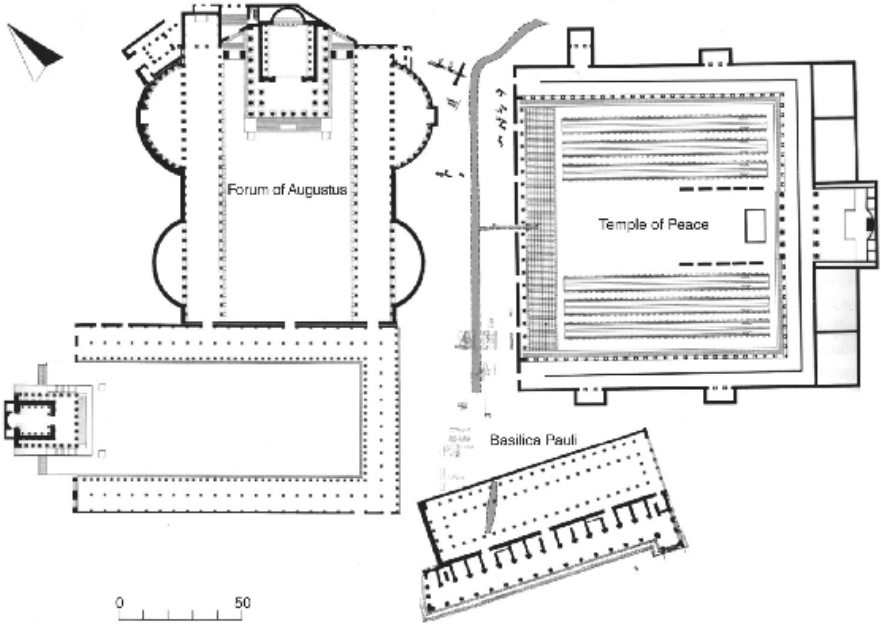

Figure 18.4 The Imperial Fora, circa AD 75. Reconstruction after Elisabetta Bianchi and Roberto Meneghini (2007).

Nor should one underestimate the significance of the recentness of the work forming the culmination of this "most beautiful" urban ensemble. Not only in rhetoric, but in architecture too, modernity could be considered to achieve greatness better than the past. Pausanias ranked Trajan's monuments at Rome alongside those of ancient Greece (5.12.6). For Longinus, it was "too easy, and peculiar to mankind, to find fault with the present" (*De Subl.* 44.6). In Vitruvius there is no word of such a higher aspiration, but his second preface, on the architect Deinocrates, implies a correlation between new architecture and a beautiful appearance. He humbly, or perhaps disingenuously, contrasts the personal features of himself, who represents the modern generation, "marred by age" (*faciem deformavit aetas*: 2.pr.4) with those of the historical Deinocrates, the vigorous young man promoted by Alexander. Or is that only to contrast himself and his old-fashioned buildings with the new architecture of the young Octavian, the new Alexander? Lucian would similarly point to "that orator in Homer" [Thersites] who "said he did not care much for physical beauty, but made himself look like a complete idiot so that the beauty of his words would come more unexpectedly in comparison with his ugliness" (Lucian, *Dom.* 17). The buildings of the present (and the future) stand opposed to "monuments of the past" like the House of Romulus, which shows still the "manners of antiquity." One has beauty, the other monumentality. The distinction, of course, was not always so plain. Through the value of *firmitas*, Vitruvius' architectural principles can with some plausibility be interpreted as

the components of a “monumentality” capable of competing with the architecture of the past. Later, Edmund Burke was more pessimistic, distinguishing “the sublime” represented by the mysterious lost past, “supernatural” in comparison with ourselves, from “the beautiful,” that perfection in art of which a modern society is capable. Can we, then, make only “beautiful” buildings, not “sublime” ones?

How would writers a century after Pliny have responded? By then technological developments and the much more widespread use of marble made their mark on aesthetic values. The introduction of the arcade – arches supported directly on classical columns, as in the Severan basilica at Lepcis – must have modified earlier aesthetics of columnar architecture. The appearance of the pendentive, to support a dome rising above a square room, in Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli and the Baths of Caracalla, and in the latter building the great bronze lattice ceiling of the caldarium, awakened Roman viewers to a new aesthetic, much as, earlier, Cicero had been keen to cultivate the authority of the vault. Would the three buildings acclaimed by Pliny still be considered “the most beautiful buildings the world has ever seen”? The attention given to the Temple of Peace by Septimius Severus might suggest the high regard in which that complex continued to be held then, but it will have been challenged by his new Septizodium awash with colored marble which greeted visitors to Rome entering from the Appian Way. Where did the Pantheon rank, which Severus restored “with all ornament [*cultus*].” Could works in the provinces now challenge those at Rome? The Severan monuments at Lepcis? The Asclepieion at Pergamon, or “Grove of Rufinus”?

The satirist Lucian signaled two other buildings. Stopping short of naming or locating them, he provides architectural critiques which highlight the aesthetic values of the time. I have discussed elsewhere (Thomas 2007, 221–229) the qualities which contribute to a perception of monumental beauty: the raised terrace situation of the baths, approached by an imposing stairway; the expectation of interior spaciousness enhanced by Lucian’s “language of excellence” characteristic of accounts of the cosmos (Runia 1992), starting with the central hall, “highest in height, lightest in light,” and culminating in the inner anointing room, “most beautiful of all rooms … glowing [*apostilbein*, like the bathers anointing their bodies there] up to the ceiling in Phrygian [marble]”: “very attractive to sit in, very safe to linger in, and very useful to roll around in” (Lucian, *Hippias* 6), it uncannily satisfies the three Vitruvian requirements of *venustas*, *firmitas*, and *utilitas* (*De Arch.* 1.3.2). The marble decoration includes cold pools faced with green Laconian marble (serpentino, or green porphyry) to evoke the ocean (Barry 2007), the hot corridor, “morticed together with [yellow] Numidian marble,” and the caldarium, “in flower with purple porphyry,” Docimian *pavonazzetto*. These three marbles represent a triad of imperial architecture, assigned by Hadrian to the gymnasium at Smyrna and, in Statius’ description, the only ones allowed

to grace the bath of Claudius Etruscus in Rome (*Silv.* 1.5). Martial's account of the same baths (*Ep.* 6.42) included other marbles, but emphasized the same triad, which also dominated the baths of Tucca (*Ep.* 9.75). The reflections from the marbles of the natural sunlight in the undoubtedly south-facing hot rooms, enhanced by strategically placed mirrors contrived by the architect Hippias, and "by the glow, shining and guiding lights [*photagogoi*]" on the way out, produced a radiant beauty which could be called *lamprotes* (*Hippias* 7). Similarly, the beauty of the hall described in Lucian's other architectural piece was highlighted by its eastward orientation, which caused the intensity of the morning sun to be reflected off the gilded ceiling, bathing the building in a brilliance like a peacock's feathers (Lucian, *Dom.* 6–10).

If both these imagined buildings have a monumental grandeur of beauty (*pulchritudo*), characterized by brilliant light and a marble decoration recognizable in the Temple of Peace, this is also combined with a more refined taste akin to *venustas*. The bathing rooms show *symmetria*, "with their heights in proportion and their breadths commensurate to their lengths," and a sensuous beauty where "everywhere Grace and Love are in full flower" (*Hippias* 7). This *venustas* is something distinctly feminine, a charge to which beautiful architecture was vulnerable not just in the "wanton display" of Lucian's Hall (*Dom.* 15), but since Periclean Athens, whose buildings were criticized "for gilding and beautifying the city like a wanton woman" (Plut. *Per.* 12.2), an image which perhaps came to mind because of the feminine appearance of their voluptuous Ionic details. So too Peregrinus launched a tirade against Herodes Atticus for "feminizing the Greeks" with his new marble fountain at Olympia (Lucian, *Peregr.* 19)

How does this impact on the visual aesthetic, or on what we might call decorative "taste"? On one hand, the Three Graces evoked in verse epigrams as bathers or dwellers in the bath and in mosaics (Concordia, Corycus, and Cherchell: Dunbabin 1989, 12, 21), were visualized through crystalline white marble statuary adorning bath complexes.[9] But this imagery was complemented by the *poikilia* of the colored "marble style," which produced a new visual aesthetic more "rarefied" and "precious" than the imperial grandeur admired by Pliny (De Nuccio and Ungaro 2002). Colored Carystian marble, in wave patterns with blue-green streaks, brought to life the imagery of the ocean in the frigidarium of the Villa of the Quintilii on the Appian Way outside Rome, just as for Virgil the sea is a sheet of marble (*marmor*) (Barry 2007, 631–632). Not to be outdone, the Nymphaeum of Egeria on their rival Herodes Atticus' Triopion estate was paved with *verde antico* and *serpentino* marbles (Kammerer-Grothaus 1974, 151), which recreated a grassy landscape with dislocated shades of artificial green such as Juvenal's Umbricius had despised (Juv. *Sat.* 3.19). The vestibules of the tepidarium of the Baths of Caracalla were lined with Spartan green porphyry (Lazzarini 2007, 49). The use of this marble to recreate natural colors continued to the olive-leaf capitals

of this material in S. Apollinare at Ravenna.

Buildings and Love

By contrast with the grandeur of *pulchritudo*, Vitruvius' concept of architectural beauty, *venustas*, was the property of the goddess Venus, Greek Aphrodite, goddess of love and desire (as also noted by McEwen 2003 , 200). I have argued elsewhere that the Roman love of buildings was a sensual and sensuous pleasure, akin almost to sexual desire (Thomas 2007, 216). Not just in private buildings (Pliny, *Ep.* 5.6.13; *CIL* 6.1585b = *ILS* 5920.18-21), but in certain public buildings too we find in the second to third centuries AD the articulation of strong feelings of sensuous pleasure.

Baths in particular were the locus of this attitude. An epigram by Junior found in the Bagni di S. Rocco at Mondragone expressed the aesthetic (*IG* 14.889 = Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca* 810):

> Sharing a boundary with the Sinuessan coast Aphrodite, look, stranger, rises again from the sea:
>
> My temples gleam below the shore which was once the delight of the house of Drusus and his consort, cherished in the bosom of the bay.
> The whole place drew persuasion and desire for this, fit for cheerful good spirit;
> For I shared a hearth with couches of Bacchus and,
> Garlanded, drew the load of cups towards me.
> Springs gush forth around the foot of the baths,
> Which my son, swimming, heats with fire.
> Don't pass me by in vain, strangers; I am Kupris
> Neighbour to Ocean, Nymphs and the Noisy One.

The visitor's attention is drawn to the statue of Venus, which then is given voice to speak of her "temples," a bathing complex once cherished by the house of Drusus and his wife, which "gleam" (*stilbousin*) on the shore. The "whole place, fit for cheerful good spirit, drew persuasion and desire" with "couches of Bacchus," the natural spring and baths "lit with fire by my son [Cupid]." The locale, associated not just with Venus but with the nymphs of the spring, is an aesthetic ideal, the "beautiful plaything [*athurma*]" of the imperial family, inspiring feelings of passion and desire.

The poem uses language common in epigrams in public baths, invoking not just Venus, but the Nymphs and Bacchus, and hinting at the special architectural appearance of such a place, characterized by bright light and exquisite materials. Architecturally, the baths are likely to have been exquisitely decorated, perhaps with "alabaster," or onyx, columns like the twelve ones used to support the roof of the theatre in the Royal Palace at

Caserta, which were traditionally reported to have been stolen from the ruins of the Temple of Serapis at Puteoli (de Filippis 1956, 42; Caroselli 1968, 57; cf. Hersey 1983, 202).

By Pliny's time the architectural use of onyx (Borghini 2001, 140–141) was becoming fashionable as a high-cost and artistic way to attract aesthetic attention: "Nepos reports that it was a great object of wonder when P. Lentulus Spinther displayed amphoras made of onyx that were as large as Chian wine-jars;" "and yet, only five years later," he writes, "I saw columns of this material, no less than thirty-two feet high." Even later, there was a change in this stone; for "[L.]Cornelius Balbus set up four small ones in his Theatre as a remarkable object of wonder: and I myself have seen thirty larger ones in the banqueting-room erected by Claudius' freedman Callistus, so well known for the influence which he possessed. This stone is called 'alabaster' (*alabastrites*) by some … It is found in the neighbourhood of Thebes in Egypt and Damascus in Syria, the Damascus variety being whiter than the others. The most valued kind, however, is that of Carmania [in Iran], the next being the produce of India, and then those of Syria and Asia." (Pliny, *NH* 36.59–61)

Quarried in the Nile valley, at the west edge of the Eastern Desert, this "Egyptian alabaster" or Lapis Onyx, now sometimes known as "Cotognino," was the source not only for precocious objects of beauty, but also for architectural columns of particular refinement. A more widely available substitute for this material, and noted for its similar coloring and visual effect, was Docimian marble from the quarry at Synnada on Phrygia, from which "columns and slabs, remarkable for their size and beauty, are conveyed to Rome" (Strabo, *Geog.* 12.8.14).

It was Egyptian alabaster, the *flexus onyx* (Stat. *Silv.* 1.2.149), which best brought about the refinement of *concinnitas*, cultivating a taste appropriate to the sensuous world of Venus and the Nymphs. Just as *venustas*, "beauty", was the quality of Venus, a similar aesthetic ideal could now also be attributed to the buildings of the nymphs. The most famous place associated with the Nymphs was the cave in Homer's *Odyssey* (13.102–113): "Inside were long stone looms, where nymphs wove webs purple as the sea, a wonder to behold; and within were ever-flowing waters" (*Od.* 13.107–109).

For the philosopher Porphyry, this place became a symbol of architectural perfection and of the cosmos itself:

> Because of matter, the cosmos is mist-like and dark, but, because of the weaving and arrangement of form which gave the *kosmos* its name, it is beautiful and beloved. Therefore, it might properly be called a cave that is pleasant for one as soon as one confronts it because of its share in form, but seems mist-like as one examines its foundation and enters it with one's mind; and so the exterior is superficially pleasing, while the interior is mist-like in depth.

(Porph. *Antr. Nymph.* 5–6)

Thus the Nymphs (Di Caterina 1976) become a metaphor for beauty and the "Nymphaeum" an aesthetic ideal. Among its most special architectural emblems and legacies were the spirally fluted column and shell conch, which together represent one of the most exquisite conceptions of Roman architecture: its intricate spiral not only requires consummate workmanship and artistic precision, but exhibits *eurythmia*; a favorite of the "shrines" of the Nymphs, its beauty and allure was best communicated through precious materials such as onyx. But that is another story, which I shall tell elsewhere.

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FURTHER READING

The aesthetics of ancient architecture is a relatively new subject. The subject was introduced to English readers by Bek (1976), which emphasized the use of rhetorical language by Latin authors of the first century AD to describe private architecture, and Bek (1985), which applied similar principles to urban architecture of the Hellenistic and Roman East, identifying the interest in creating long-range views in ancient city planning. Work is mostly restricted to individual authors: for Vitruvius, Knell (1991) and (2008) are fundamental, while McEwen (2003) provides interesting interpretations; for Statius, Newmyer (1984); for Pliny and Vitruvius, Bek (1976); Thomas (2007, ch. XI) provides a survey of architectural aesthetics in ancient texts from Homer to late antiquity and ch. XII offers a particular study of Lucian. Haselberger (1999) provides several detailed and up-to-date discussions of the various optical techniques employed by ancient Greek and Roman architects to achieve aesthetic effects. Snyder (2000) and Nasrallah (2010) consider architectural aesthetics from an early Christian perspective.

NOTES

1 As became evident to me when hearing Anastasia Peponi chapter on dance at the Louvain-la-Neuve symposium, December 15, 2011. See her chapter in this volume.

2 "… pulchritudinem esse quendam consensum et conspirationem partium in eo, cuius sunt, ad certum numerum finitionem collocationemque habitam ita uti concinnitas, hoc est absoluta primariaque ratio naturae postularit." *De re aedificatoria libri decem*, ed. Giovanni Orlandi (Milan, 1966), 817.

3 "Quare, quae sunt ampla atque pulcra, diu placere possunt; quae lepida et concinna, cito satietate adficiunt aurium sensum fastidiosissimum."

4 *Astraptousa apo pasou esodou*; for the verb *astraptein*, cf. Aristid. *Or.* 18.6.

5 The view that the Forum of Augustus and Temple of Peace were closed off from public access, itself the result of privileging these places as visual monuments, finds no support in either archaeological or literary sources. All three monuments were entered from the Argiletum zone, though in the case of the Basilica Aemilia one first had to walk along its sumptuous north facade before entering the building from its eastern end.

6 Or, if one follows Schneider in reading *e[t] Phrygibus* in Pliny's text (above), one could see these sculpted images of barbarians along the attic storey, still of Phrygian marble, pavonazzetto, as a feature which linked the basilica to the iconography of the Forum Augustum.

7 The date is established by coin evidence; see updated bibliography in *LTUR* V.

8 Works of art which had been collected by Nero for the Domus Aurea were subsequently exhibited in the Templum Pacis by Vespasian (Plin. *NH* 34.84), and several bases for the display of individual sculptures by Athenian artists have been found, identified by the names inscribed on them. Many of the spoils taken from the Temple at Jerusalem were displayed somewhere in the Forum complex, perhaps in the cult-room (*aedes*) of Pax (Josephus, *BJ* 7.161). The function of the rooms adjacent to the shrine of Pax remains unclear: one of these was certainly later used to display the Severan Marble Plan, and finds of statues of the Stoic Chrysippus and of Septimius Severus in philosophical pose may suggest that there was a library here too (Papini 2005).

9 For example, at Cyrene and in the South Bath at Perge, among the gallery of statues dedicated by Claudius Peison (Piso?).

CHAPTER 19
Stylistic Landscapes

Nancy Worman

"Landscape" is a term freighted with historical, cultural, and especially aesthetic meaning. As a conceptual orientation and way of seeing it emerges coincident with and helps to shape the history of aesthetics and representation, as well as being a form of evaluative negotiation. In the introduction to his influential edited volume *Landscape and Power*, W.J.T. Mitchell urges the need to address the ways in which "landscape *circulates* as a medium of exchange, a site of visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identity" (2002, 2). Such formulations suggest contention and struggle, not so much for the land itself as for a way of seeing – an organizing scheme that is aesthetic and value-laden and that carries enough force as to appear to be reality rather than interpretation (cf. Cosgrove on Ruskin in Cosgrove and Daniels 2002, 5).

Long before the development of aesthetic conventions in landscape art and architecture, we can already witness in Pindar's odes how the poet-performer celebrates ritual centers such as Olympia and Delphi as received landscapes laden with sensory pleasures and cultural meaning. Even less renowned areas such as the bank of the Ilissus river in Athens give this impression. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates appreciates the lay of the land like a connoisseur of the conventions of the *locus amoenus*, wryly casting its beauties in terms that recall encomiastic rhetoric and engaging a long poetic tradition that associates such settings with divine inspiration.[1] Many centuries later, theorists such as Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus take up this same setting as a means of highlighting their participation in this negotiation with Greek traditions about beauty, leisure, and sensory response. The aesthetics of ancient landscapes, then, embraces aspects of layered cultural settings as they are familiarly viewed, such as the Athenian theater and temple precincts, as well as internationally celebrated sanctuaries like Delphi and Olympia.

My discussion aims to demonstrate how ancient poets and prose writers shape landscapes out of significant topographies, highlighting certain rural settings as pleasurable and even erotic, as opposed to hard won and ethically stringent. Some scenes center on famous sites of religious and civic celebration, but their descriptions often overlap in tropes and tone with those more fully mythic and fictional. Portrayals of landscapes also tend to foreground their physical inhabitation, privileging a viewer and/or cultivator of the setting's features and thereby promoting the poet-performer's or orator-politician's skills. These are thus not neutral spaces, since they are always bound up with aesthetic negotiations that open out onto ethical and political valuations. Art's topographies give shape to desires that run from the many and diverse

pleasures of rustic retreat (which have their own suspect politics) to fantasies of control and dominion in poetic contests, theoretical reach, and cultural and territorial supremacy.

Viewing and Reinventing the *Locus Amoenus*

Elaine Scarry, in her provocative two-part essay *On Beauty and Being Just*, opens her discussion by asking and answering one central question (Scarry 1999 , 3–4): "What is the felt experience of cognition at the moment one stands in the presence of a beautiful boy or flower or bird? In seems to incite, even to require, the act of replication." In this first section Scarry elaborates on the idea that moments of viewing and apprehending beauty, what she calls "visual events," inspire mimetic gestures, even as the perception of this beauty may also urge on us the notion that it is like nothing else. By way of example she offers Odysseus' response at the sight of Nausicaa in book 6 of the *Odyssey*. First he declares that he has never seen the like of her, then immediately finds her analogy: the young palm beside Apollo's altar at Delphi (*Od*. 6.160–165). Scarry emphasizes the generative energy that lies in the act of reproducing or emulating, and most of the examples she uses are natural: she especially finds trees and flowers inspiring of comparison and mimesis (cf. Scarry 1997 and further below). In the case of poets and earlier theorists such as Socrates this emulation involves staging the drama of the visual event, apprehending (typically pastoral) settings and their occupants as divine, evocative, or beautiful, and reproducing their features by means of mimesis and metaphor.

The dynamics of such mimetic strategies highlight relations between bodies and settings, as well as between nature and its artful uses. For instance, some ancient writers treat figuration as having a natural grounding, which could suggest that correspondences linking, say, physical deportments to landscapes would be conceived of as rooted in the way the world works rather than in (mere) formal analogies. Or we can turn this about, and see that these writers shape nature to fit the formal patterns they conceive – a theoretical version of nature imitating art. This imposition of artistic order on natural topographies achieves a type of cultural domination that underpins and is underpinned by political and ideological ambitions to shape values and dominate territory.

A sophisticated understanding of landscape as a valued and evaluative medium bound up with status, mimesis, and desire existed from very early moments in the ancient literary record. By this I mean that beginning with Homeric epic scenes that pivot around the aesthetic appreciation of significant landscapes indicate, sometimes in quite precise terms, particular cultural hierarchies and values (see Giesecke 2007). Take, for instance, the site of Calypso's cave, with its birds, tall trees, miraculous springs, and blooming meadows (5.59–74). When Hermes approaches and sees this remarkable

setting, the poet declares that even a god would gaze at it in wonder and delight in his heart (*Od*. 5.73–74). The Homeric poet's elaborate description is rich in sensual details, offering its audience a roster of pleasures that the god's appreciative viewing punctuates: the scent of burning cedar and sweetwood wafts from far off; within the cave the nymph sings in a lovely voice; the meadows around bloom soft with violets and parsley (59–73). Interwoven with these sensory effects are multiple delights for the eye (e.g. the flourishing trees [63–64], the long-winged birds [65–67], the gleaming cave with its swag of grapevines [68–69], the sparkling water leaping in four directions [70–71]). The poet also underscores this visual splendor by repeating the verb *theaomai* ("gaze in wonder") twice more, before moving on to remark upon Hermes' recognition of Calypso and the knowledge that the gods have of one another (5.77–80). Only when Hermes has looked to his heart's content (5.76) does he enter the cave.

Many of the scenes that I think central to understanding the aesthetics of landscape in ancient literature and culture are like this: they stage a scene of viewing, elaborate upon the details of the scene, and characterize the viewer's reaction. Usually this last element involves some form of awe and/or pleasure and often it includes urges toward emulation, mimetic gestures that poets and prose writers reinscribe in the telling. In the process the described landscapes in their features index metonymically qualities prized by the genre through which the description is shaped and, at least to a certain extent, by the surrounding culture. Further, the appreciative gazing staged in these scenes models for its audience this very appreciation – that is, the features that ought to be valued as beautiful, awe-inspiring, or otherwise impressive. Thus Hermes' wonder and enjoyment in looking upon Calypso's cave encourages a high appraisal of its aspects, even as the scene also suggests that there may be something vaguely menacing in the magical quality of their combination. In addition, this staging of wonder and appreciation urges a more general awareness of aesthetic pleasures, including those of the poetic performance underway. In this instance the richness of the cave's features calls attention to not only Calypso's divine status but also the special qualities of Homeric imagery, with its luxurious real estate and aristocrat's leisured appreciation of visualizing elaborations and plentiful details. The depiction urges the prizing of richness and fullness over, say, austerity, simplicity, and restraint – attributes that characterize ethical and economic values as well as aesthetic ones.

This staging of the spectator's pleasure turns out to be very influential in ancient literary convention. As mentioned, one of the most famous instances occurs near the beginning of the *Phaedrus*, when Socrates and Phaedrus take a ramble outside of the city walls. After they ford the Ilissus (walking downstream) and find a place to settle on the south bank (Wycherley 1963, 91–92), Socrates remarks with apparent pleasure that the waters there seem

“delightful and pure and clear” (*charienta goun kai kathara kai diaphanē*, 229b7–8). Indeed, Phaedrus has carefully chosen a spot along the river that is such a perfect combination of natural elements that it sends Socrates into poeticizing transports. He exclaims that the plane and agnus trees offer lovely shade, and the flowers of the latter fill the place with perfume. The stream that flows under the plane tree is most delightful for its cool water. There are *agalmata* of the Nymphs and of Achelous there, suggesting its connection to river-cult practices and to pastoral (or proto-pastoral) poetry. Cicadas sing overhead, themselves quintessentially pastoral poetic creatures, as Socrates’ later story about them confirms (cf. 258e6–259d8). Most exquisite of all (*kompsotaton*) is the meadow, the soft slope of which is perfect for reclining (230b2–c5).[2]

As in the Homeric scene, the highlighted features of the *locus amoenus* indicate aesthetic valuations reflected in the vocabulary of the description, even if these overtly ironize elite appreciation of the countryside. Socrates, who is famously indifferent to conventional trappings (e.g. creature comforts, fancy talk), couches his transports about the pastoral setting in poeticizing, Gorgianic language, an elegant arabesque complete with a metaphor for its own style (i.e. *kompsotaton*).[3] Further, he engages in an elaborate mimesis of the features of the landscape (including the flowing water, the grassy meadow, and the sweetness or desire associated with these), ambitiously appropriating the conventional pastoral setting for this suburban space just outside the city walls.[4] Thus he first transforms the *locus amoenus* from the flower-filled space that provides source materials for poetic metaphors into a wry city man’s collection of attributes that characterize sophistic rhetoric and particularly its most elaborate stylist, Gorgias. Later on these same features are put to more elevated use, serving as a metaphorical grounding for Socrates’ account of how the soul that is attentive to true beauty ascends upward by means of wings and toils to occupy the heavenly “plain” or “meadow” (*pedion*, *leimōn*, 248b6–8). The wings of the soul grow from viewing the beautiful beloved, which inspires love’s warmth and flow (251a–d, 253b, 255c–d), the details of which invoke mountain streams and a garden’s watering.[5] It may be assembled piecemeal, but here are the pleasures and erotic attractions of the *locus amoenus* transformed into a philosophical idyll. Later on, however, Socrates will distance himself from this lovely conceptual space as well, characterizing his speech as inspired by the Nymphs and Pan, worrying that he got a little carried away, and hedging about its style: “We playfully offered a sort of mythic hymn, but moderately and piously” (*metriōs kai euphēmōs*, 265c1–2).

The *Phaedrus*’ pastoral frame thus is simultaneously fitting for a competition among speeches about love (a favorite bucolic pastime) and a wry nod at the eulogizing of brook and tree enjoyed in elite and leisured settings. From Socrates’ lowbrow, modern, “outsider’s” perspective, poetic exclamation and

rhetorical encomia are jejune activities, pleasant enough but essentially old-fashioned, indulgent of aristocratic proclivities, and even a little silly. And yet since Socrates wants something from this scene he quickly moves beyond mere lampoon, taking a double turn: first he makes the poetic topos and tropes rhetorical, then he indicates a new critical mode and a new type of perception associated with and described by means of resources drawn from this same idyllic remove. Thus while Socrates' customary irony distances him from conventional rhetorical critique, his appreciation and reanimation of the idyll pegs the philosophical pursuit of beauty directly to the features of the bucolic setting, establishing a new conceptual space and landscape that aims to transcend conventional elite hierarchies.

Although Socrates' double move does not overtly indicate the forging of a novel aesthetic scheme (even if this is at least in part what it is doing), the prologue of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* foregrounds the artistic representation of the pastoral scene as the additional mimetic layer. Here the narrator initiates his tale by emphasizing the relationship among the beauty of the actual *locus amoenus* in which he stands, the delights of a painting of a magical pastoral scene, and the mimetic desire it inspires.[6] He relates how in a grove of the Nymphs he "saw the most beautiful sight [he] had ever seen" (*theama kalliston*). The grove itself was lovely – tree-filled, flowering, well watered – but the painting within it was "more delightful" (*terpnoteron*) still (p. 1.1). The narrator thus offers this *mise en abyme* as the motivation for his tale: he declares that he is so thoroughly infused with erotic pleasures that it inspires in him "looking and wondering" (*idonta kai thaumasanta*) the desire to "write back" to the painting (p. 1.2). He dedicates his narrative mimesis of the painting to Eros and the requisite pastoral deities: the Nymphs and Pan (p. 1.3). As Froma Zeitlin has argued, this and other gardens within the narrative reiterate in different forms the relationships among the *locus amoenus*, desire, and imitation, so that the narrative as a whole is structured in central ways by them.[7] The scene also stages a tourist's appreciation of the natural landscape and its representation, whose knowing gestures indicate with some pride the long cultural tradition underlying the elaborate and layered mimesis.

Girls' Meadows

A further layer of suggestion underpins this pleasurable viewing, one that is essentially erotic in its extensions. As many scholars have explored, most of the landscapes emphasized in early poetry are rural, sensual, and related to young female sexuality and rites of passage (see, for example, Bremer 1975 ; Swift 2009). Think, for instance, of Sappho calling Aphrodite to join in girls' festivities at her own lovely precinct with its rose blossoms and flowing water in fr. 2; or (more darkly) of Persephone's meadowland play with her flower-faced maidens and her fateful grab for the narcissus (*HDem*. 1–16). Admittedly, these landscapes become one trope among others in ancient

reception, but they remain central to Greek and Roman conceptions of how landscapes consolidate aesthetic and social meanings. Thus the parodos of Euripides' *Helen*, which takes the form of a *kommos* (i.e. the protagonist sings a lament with the chorus), points up the darker side of this association with Pan, of fertility or marriage rituals, and of the *locus amoenus* or "young girls in meadows" tropes and *topos* – rape.[8] Helen, in this drama chaste and abandoned in Egypt, opens the ode by invoking the Sirens and Persephone as suitable leaders of her lament, and naming the proper instruments for accompaniment (*Hel*. 167–178). The chorus responds with a domesticating scene that matches her aural metonymies with visual ones, in a highly colored and startling juxtaposition of lyric beauty and violence (179–190):

Beside the dark-blue water,
on the curling grasses,
I happened to be brightening
scarlet gowns in the sun's
golden rays, near the reed stems;
from there I heard a piteous cry,
a mournful lament, because
she was wailing miserably,
just as a Naiad nymph might have cried out
keening a song of woe in the hills,
under rocks hollow with her screams,
shouting out the rape of Pan.

While the chorus of captive Greek women depict the seizure of Helen as like that of a nymph in the mountains, it also takes place as lament, as song, thereby fusing the violent event and ritual practice to the making of poetry. Further, it offers details suggestive of class and gender rankings that frame the scene as essentially aristocratic, befitting of an older lyric age in which women's work closely borders high-status alliances. (The most famous scene of this sort is *Odyssey* 6, where the poet frames Nausicaa as engaged in this domestic task while also readying herself for marriage appropriate to her elite status.) That in this version of Helen's story she is taken by Hermes, who snatches her away like a treasure for safe-keeping, does not alter the nature of action as reinforcing female characters' status as desirable and defenseless possessions of aristocratic men. Nor does it make it any less like a virgin's tale, with its bright clothing and vivid riverside setting, or any less of a piece with hymns and odes centering on the rapes in meadows of girls, nymphs, or female deities (e.g. Io, Oreithyia, Europa, Korē).[9]

At the other end of this convention we find that this virgin's setting has become what we might call programmatic transvestism. Catullus, for instance, completes the Sapphic stanzas of *c*. 11 by refiguring Sappho's image of the trampled hyacinth, apparently a metaphor for lost virginity in a wedding song

(*epithalamion*, fr. 105 L-P). In Catullus' poem the field-edge flower (*prati / ultimi flos*, 22–23) cut down by the passing plow becomes an image of the narrator's ruined love as well as the poet's refinement. Compare also Propertius, whose "little wheels" (*parvis … rotis*, 3.3.18) run through the soft meadows of girls' songs and to whom Apollo indicates a "new footpath" (*nova semita*, 26) to a cave that contains metonymic symbols indicating some mainstays of Latin pastoral (e.g. Pan's hymns, satyrs' songs).

Pilgrimage I: Remote and Floral Pleasures

Because landscapes themselves bridge the gap between reality and representation, I should note at this point that, however essentially literary the scenes I analyze here are, they have their grounding in broader cultural practices that tie them to specific topographies as well as other artistic media such as dance and ultimately painting (witness, for example, the ekphrastic inspirations of Longus and Achilles Tatius). Thus some scenes of viewing and inhabiting landscapes more clearly dramatize pilgrimages of one sort or another, as in Hesiod's hike up the mountain in the *Theogony* or Pindar's Delphic celebrations. Because of the embodied, place-specific quality of poetic invocation, we should recognize that actual places in Boeotia and Attica also become settings in both Greek and Roman reception for the aesthetic and cultural significance of certain landscapes and their features. These include, most notably, Delphi and Mount Parnassus, the springs on Hesiod's Helicon and the Valley of the Muses below, and the Ilissus and Cephisus rivers in ancient Athens. The Boeotian mountains were home to famous sites of pilgrimage, inspiration, and cultic activities, while the areas along Athenian rivers were home to sanctuaries (including one to the Muses) and parkland retreats such as the Academy (on Boeotia see Berman 2004 ; on Athens see Wycherley 1978). These places have specific identities, practices associated with them, and known denizens (e.g. poets on the mountain, philosophers in the garden); and they accumulate long-held aesthetic and ethical identities as such.

In Archaic poetry – which is to say, in the early development of landscape conventions – ideas about poetic authority, knowledge, and the beauties of expression are inevitably bound up with the Muses. However one understands the relationship between poet and Muse, it is clear in some general sense that the poet's skills and inspirations come from the Muses, and that these together shape his aesthetic capabilities. The set of associations that I want to articulate, however, is site specific. Decades ago Rosemary Harriott suggested that one of the sources for the images that poets use to highlight their wisdom and authority are cultic practices involving the Muses. While the recognition that the Muses were deities with local cults is not unique to Harriott, her emphasis on cultic practice as a source for aesthetic details offers a means of understanding why a poet might need, say, a laurel branch (usually with the

leaves still on) to consolidate his authority – that is, why the rural setting might have originally been the necessary space of poetic resources and thus aesthetic formulations.[10]

A figure who operates at the outer edges of this poetic territory but who seems central to its early formulation is the Arcadian god Pan. While he is more fully a divine extension of the wild mountain scene than Orpheus and his fellow nature poets, he is also absorbed into the cultural tradition as a crucial metonymy for pastoral modes and scenes. The *Homeric Hymn to Pan* shows why this might be the case, since it praises the god by means of a romp on the mountainside. All the elements of the *locus amoenus* are there, up among the mountain crags, and it is a space for superb and exclusive song and dance (*HPan* 14–26):

Only at evening, as he returns from the chase,
he raises a song, playing a sweet song on
his reed pipes: not even she could surpass him
in melodies – that bird who in flower-laden spring
pouring forth her lament voices a honeyed song
amid the leaves. Then the clear-singing mountain
nymphs are with him and move with nimble feet,
singing by some dark-watered spring, while Echo
rings out on the mountain-top, and the god on this side
or that of the choirs, or at times slipping into the midst,
leads nimbly with his feet. On his back he wears
a tawny lynx-pelt, and he delights in clear-pitched
songs, in a soft meadow where crocuses and hyacinths,
sweet-smelling and flourishing, mingle at random in the grass.

Like the Muses at Hesiod's spring high on Mount Helicon (*Th*. 1–8), the scene is one suggestive of cultic practices in the mountains, as well as clearly marking out the aesthetic parameters of Pan's mode.[11] His signature sound is honeyed and clear, like that of the Muses, and even sweeter than that of the nightingale singing out from her flowery retreat.[12] The god's accompanying nymphs dance around a dark spring, making music with him. The dancing ground is a meadow scattered with flowers – soft, blooming, and vaguely erotic. Pan's recondite space thus hosts equally rich and elaborate sensations, so that the "rustic" setting foregrounds a sense of its own special luxuries.

In an article entitled "Imagining Flowers: Perceptual Mimesis (Particularly Delphinium)," Scarry claims that there is something special about flowers that makes the analogy to poeticizing language so apt. Scarry's discussion focuses on the workings of mimesis and the imagination, urging that the image of the flower, unlike many other objects of the imagination, marks what she calls "[imagination's] willful re-encumbering of itself, its anchoring of itself in the ground." She follows John Ashbery's romantic but compelling notion that

earlier writers deployed floral imagery by way of offering the best, most grounded analogy to the pleasures of poetry, but she goes a step further, finding in the flower the perfect sensory object (Scarry 1997, 90–93).

Indeed, the lush landscapes of ancient poetry, and perhaps especially the baroque texture of Pindar's places, offer fertile material for pondering the movements of aesthetic response and their grounding by means of metaphor (i.e. attraction to a setting, inhabitation of it, deployment of its features). The poet's pilgrimages to exclusive, flourishing, and/or flowery settings themselves mime the movement of metaphor, which traverses the space between the familiar target and its "foreign" gloss, to use Aristotle's metaphors for the workings of metaphor (see *Poet*. 1457a7, 1458a22–23; *Rhet*. 1404b8–12). Further, the shared imagery effectively conjoins the means by which ancient poets, and Pindar in particular, shape settings for and images of the performance of elaborate song, with the inhabiting of landscapes that transforms them into spaces of perceptual articulation, spaces that appear in their figurative details to aim especially at aesthetic discriminations.

As many scholars have noted, Pindar's metaphors are singular in their range and variety (e.g. Steiner 1986; Patten 2009). At the risk of oversimplifying his stunning compendium of images for the flourishing of athletic and aesthetic skills, we can recognize that flower and garden metaphors for the poet's inspiration and craft are common and that they both stand for and themselves manifest the heights of his abilities. That is to say, Pindar's floral images lay claim to inspiration and authority and are its result; they achieve the transport at the heart of aesthetic response and in their prominence draw the audience to the vibrant pleasures of the imagery itself. This is the flower of metaphor, which sits at the center of and stands for beauty in language. It is, of course, itself a metaphor, perhaps the central metaphor for the elaborate style that Pindar made famous and notorious among ancient poets and literary critics. And although these images point up the variegated skills of the poet, the rich proliferation of such decorative effects in Pindar's poetry suggests that it is the flower that matters.

Further, these metaphors draw the eye repeatedly to settings that are recognizable as indicating both features of actual topographies and the performer's artistry. Since the Muses, the Hours, the Graces, or nymphs usually inhabit these settings, they serve as figurative intersections with the victors' home cities and perhaps especially the actual spaces of celebration, fashioning what Proust might have recognized as a "heraldic" overlay for these places.[13] These heraldic gestures often deploy metonyms invoking the sanctuaries in which the games and sometimes the victory celebrations took place, so that the spaces created by the individual poems are notably hybrid, proliferating, and enacting (or re-enacting) of cultic practices. These spaces of poetic creativity and festive occasion do usually share certain features, however: they are fertile, flowering places, often in or near meadows, groves,

and flowing water, or captured in miniature in the victor's flourishing crowns. That is, they participate, especially via their invocation of cultic settings, in a tradition that associates the *locus amoenus* with pilgrimage and performance.

In these scenes flowers often dominate, particularly as a means of connecting celebration in the form of the victor's crown (e.g. *O*. 2.48–51, 7.80) with images of fertility such as the earth's purple-red bounty and heaven's burnished glory (e.g. *I*. 4.36–38, *O*. 2.70–74; see Nünlist 1998: 206–223 for the range of images). In *Olympian* 2, which celebrates the victory of Theron of Acragas, the poet heralds the lovely ends of life for good and noble men on the isles of the Blest. There, flowers burn bright on the surrounding waters, on the trees, and on the wreaths that interweave the Blessed ones' hands and crown their heads (*O*. 2.70–74):

There the breezes, daughters of Ocean, waft
around the Island of the Blest;
and flowers flame golden,
some on the land from glorious trees,
others the water nourishes,
they interweave with garlands
the hands and crowns/heads.

This remarkable scene, which overlays the victor's Sicilian home with the most hallowed island setting, offers flowers as the unique and variegated adornment of heaven, the perfect emanation of the sacred place. In *Nemean* 7 the speaker regards the weaving of the victors' crowns as a light task, in contrast to the work of the Muse, which is rich and miraculous. It joins gold and ivory, and the ocean's lily's flower (i.e., coral), sprinkling it with dew (77–79). This is the Pythia's flowering crown (cf. *I*. 7.72), which the poet hopes to win as the athlete does the contest.

In *Olympian* 13 (for Xenophon of Corinth) it is the flower-bedecked Hours who tossed many ancient skills into human hearts (14–15), while the sweet breath of the Muses blooms in the city (*Mois' hadupnoos anthei*, 22–23). For obvious reasons, garden settings may frame poetic skill and wisdom as fertile flowering. In *Olympian* 9, for instance, the poet hopes that he may pluck his song directly from the Graces' garden, which culling links pleasure to wisdom (26–29). Other poems, including both victory odes and paeans, offer further details of the associations among art, inspiration, the Muses (or Hours, nymphs, etc.), and rural landscapes. In *Olympian* 7, a celebration of Diagoras of Rhodes, Pindar seems also to offer his ode from the midst of a divine garden, coupling poetic abilities with images of fruit and nectar (7–9):

I too, sending flowing nectar, the gift of the Muses,
the sweet fruit of the mind, to prize-winning men,
seek the gods' favor …

Pindar's jaunts to the divinely infused edges of human lands initiate a well-sustained trope in Western literary convention. Many scholars of Hellenistic and Roman poetry have traced the various pilgrimages (or "pilgrimages") of poets to significant literary landscapes such as Mounts Parnassus and Helicon, where they drink at sacred springs (see, for example, Hunter 2006, ch. 1). But this kind of travel has a longer life still: Proust's "heraldic" landscape mentioned above continues this tradition of pilgrimage and visual appreciation of the rarified and sometimes quite recondite settings that serve as the artist's inspiration and material. Early on in *The Guermantes Way*, in a transport of romanticizing snobbery, the narrator registers the details of the French countryside "as if they had been situated at the foot of Parnassus or Helicon" ("comme si elles avaient été situées au pied du Parnasse ou de l'Hélicon") – as if, that is, his heightened senses resembled those of poets making pilgrimages to Greek mountains famous for their associations with divine inspiration and song (*RTP* II.314, Éd. Gallimard 1987–1989). With this marveling look at a familiar but magical landscape, Proust's narrator offers a wry turn on his own ambitions. An author must get his inspiration somewhere, whether he is a poet singing victory songs for elite customers or a reclusive writer with a bemused attachment to aristocratic aura. Further, the establishing and consolidation of his authority are dependent on the place names and topographical features that demarcate his notional landscaping. And for both ancient poet and modern novelist the command of this aristocratic territory ambitiously conjoins economies and topographies, their artful shaping of landscapes achieving an ideological reach far beyond the terrain described.

Pilgrimage II: In Plato's Garden

Scholars have also spent some productive time thinking about how pilgrimage and evaluative viewing of significant settings play out in ancient democratic settings. For instance, Andrea Nightingale has argued that pilgrimage and *theōria* occupy a central role in fourth-century philosophy more generally; she highlights the importance of these activities in Greek culture and the role of the *theōros* (eyewitness) at famous rituals such as those that took place at sanctuaries like Delphi and Olympia, as well as revelatory ones like the Mysteries celebrations.[14] Other issues emerge from acts of witnessing or viewing, such as which spectator is doing the looking and what claims are being made about artistic control and power in particular settings. Pilgrimages to sanctuaries and festivals, for example, revolve around such visual events, whether these are actual or fictional. Their ritual aspects overlap at least in part with dramatic and oratorical performances, insofar as these all engage viewers in coordinating embodiments of character and style with the spectacle and setting, both actual and mimetic (i.e. within and without the fictional frame created by the representation).

Let us take another look at the *Phaedrus* from this new angle. Socrates' walk

outside of the city gates is obviously a pilgrimage of sorts. In an article from 1940 Clyde Murley compiled parallels between the *Phaedrus* and Theocritean pastoral, emphasizing the Sicilian setting (Murley 1940; also Pearce 1988). He pointed to the mimes of Sophron (which Plato was said to have admired) as a possible influence, noted the focus on the Sicilian sophist Teisias (and secondarily Gorgias), and recalled the argument that Plato spent some years in Sicily during the time in which he might have written the *Phaedrus*. One could hypothesize, then, a Sicilian background for Plato's mime of an *agōn* between two rhetors (i.e. "Lysias" and "Socrates"). They sit on a hillside at midday, promise each other prizes that mock both bucolic poetry's programmatic gestures – and, more proximately, the Sicilian sophist Gorgias (i.e. the joke of the gold statues, 235d8–236b4) – and engage in a contest framed by the song of the cicadas. Kathryn Gutzwiller has contended that Socrates is modeled on the herdsman figure in Archaic poetic tradition, comparing Hesiod and the Muses on Helicon, as well as Odysseus' encounter with the Cyclops, the original Sicilian shepherd.[15] On this reading Plato would be participating in a set of essentially Sicilian literary topoi, although we cannot see the beginnings of this bucolic mode clearly and thus have some difficulty assessing his reception and transformation of them.[16]

But Socrates and Phaedrus are sitting beside the Ilissus, the river that flowed just outside the Diomean gate and southeast from the walls of Athens to the sea. Archeologists have identified the actual site of their conversation with one frequented by humble sorts such as laundresses, since a dedication from them to the Nymphs was found in the vicinity. While this would conform to Socrates' lowbrow, "shepherd's" guise, it is also significant literary and religious territory (Gutzwiller 1991, 74; cf. Wycherley 1978, 170). Aristophanes stages the journey and "initiation rites" of the *Frogs* along the marshy banks of a river and into flowering meadows on the other side, the details of which appear to map a route from the Diomean gate, across the Ilissus, and beyond toward Agrae.[17] This path through the same general area as the *Phaedrus* charts a topography carefully marked out by means of aesthetic valuations, which also provide some context for Plato's critique of rhetoric. Because of the influence of Teisias and Gorgias, Athenian writers treated the *technē* of rhetoric as coming predominantly from Sicily, which they also depicted as a place of decadence and indulgence.

Further, in the opening scenes of the *Frogs* pastoral images associated with the Frog chorus (friends of Pan and the woodland pipe), as well as with meadowland fertility rituals, constitute a possible (and, again, leisure-class) corrective to the excesses of the city, with its oratorical wrangling and crude literary sensibilities. It is not difficult to expect a similarly sophisticated deployment of a significant landscape's aesthetic features in the dialogue of Plato (whose debt to Aristophanes many scholars have noticed), one that takes a double turn. The pastoral idyll, the landscape traditions of which may be

themselves rooted at least in part in rural Sicily, mediates the Athenian reception of Sicilian rhetoric – that paradigmatic urban excess. Thus Socrates ventures not only outside the city walls but farther on, to a remote hillside traditionally inhabited by shepherd poets, taking up a philosophical homesteading and initiating a "back-to-nature" conceit.

Cicero on Retreat

Much later on in this tradition Cicero dramatizes an intellectual tourism that clearly participates in a latter-day version of pilgrimage, aesthetic appreciation, and emulation of rural (or "rural") landscapes viewed as compelling by the spectators. On the first morning of the discussions staged in *De oratore*, for instance, Scaevola walks out into Crassus' garden at Tusculum,[18] accompanied by his host and son-in-law, the orator Antonius, and two younger protegés (Cotta and Sulpicius). "Why don't we," he says, "imitate that Socrates [*Socratem illum*], as he is in Plato's *Phaedrus*." Scaevola claims that Crassus' plane tree (*platanus*, 1.28) suggested this comparison to him, since it is no less broadly shading than that in Socrates' *kalē katagōgē*. He adds, with a shrewd turn on the generative qualities of Plato's space, that Socrates' tree seems to have grown not so much from the stream beside it (*non tam ipsa acula*) as from Plato's own diction (*Platonis oratione*). Scaevola concludes that surely the grass that Socrates enjoys may be offered to his feet. Crassus improves upon this natural pillow, providing actual cushions for his guests' feet; they then sit down upon the seats under the plane tree (1.28–29).

This agile set of metonymies indicates not only that the setting is suitable for a rhetorical chat; it also cleverly inverts the Platonic conceit, so that the philosopher's language generates the lovely locale. Cicero's turn on the original Athenian terrain further suggests that the dialogue will unfold in a latter-day, perhaps more "cultured" mode (hence the private garden setting, with its cushions and seats), but one that is similarly inspired by the carefully crafted scene and wittily engaged with the aesthetics of an elite, thinking man's rhetoric. The book concludes with a punctuating reference to the heat of the day, recalling the argument that Phaedrus uses to keep Socrates talking under the plane tree (*De orat*. 1.265; cf. *Phdr*. 242a3–6). When juxtaposed to the similarly park-like settings of *De legibus* and *De finibus* 5, it appears that Cicero embraces the "pastoral" retreat as suited to philosophical (if not more actively oratorical) modes, while his repeated use of the *locus amoenus* as a framing device intimates that these discussions are necessarily launched from within this long-established and exclusive prospect (see Giesecke 2007, xi–xiv).

That this pastoral-philosophical scene has implications for the modes in which its inhabitants engage emerges in other rhetorical treatises, most notably the *Orator* and *Brutus*. In the *Orator* Cicero declares that Plato's persuasive mode

aims at calming rather than exciting the spirit (*sedare animos malunt quam incitare*) and addresses tranquil topics in order to teach rather than captivate (*Orat*. 63; cf. *Brut*. 121). He deems this mode "soft and shady" (*mollis est … et umbratilis*), a characterization that wryly echoes both the *Phaedrus*' pleasant setting and the bad training that Socrates sketches there in his first attempt at countering Lysias's speech (*Phdr*. 239c5–d1; see further below). Despite Cicero's earlier claims that philosophical engagement offers oratory a kind of palaestra training (*Orat*. 14), this is clearly a style more in keeping with philosophical chat and languishing under plane trees. This retiring mode – soft, slack, and made for the shade – unsurprisingly has not only a privileged but also a feminine cast. Rather than being sharp and sometimes violent or outrageous as is public oratory, the philosophical, Platonic style is chaste and modest, like an unsullied virgin (*casta et verecunda, virgo incorrupta quodam modo*, *Orat*. 64). As with poetry's gendered associations with flowering meadows, then, conventions around persuasive modes also foster such contrasts.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus Brookside

Scholars have noted many of the finer details of Dionysius' treatment of Plato in his treatise *On Demosthenes* and attempted to trace the debate over his style back through Caecilius and Posidonius to Aristotle (cf. *Rhet*. 1404a26–35) (see de Jonge 2008 , ch. 1). But Dionysius' aesthetic responses to the landscape of the *Phaedrus* also foster distinctions focused on Plato's own style, a new kind of pilgrimage and reinvention. While a few scholars have noted the mimetic process that motivates this passage, I think that it is more adventurous than is usually appreciated.[19] Indeed, Dionysius' use of mimetic strategies to characterize Plato's style exposes anew the relationship between viewing and reproducing that I am arguing lies at the heart of landscape aesthetics.

Dionysius uses the features of the *Phaedrus*' idyllic setting to develop a sense of Plato's style of writing as at its best a charming but transient enjoyment. In the process he echoes the contentious gendering of style that other theorists such as Cicero deploy when opposing the pastoral retreat – whose flowering meadows and sweet breezes call to mind virginal softness and delicacy – to the manly atmosphere of such arenas as the battlefield and the forum. That said, in Dionysius' treatise as in the *Phaedrus* the distinctions among settings are initially more focused on aestheticizing extensions of the *locus amoenus*. First he lavishes praise on what he takes to be Plato's lucid modes (*Dem*. 5.5–12):

Whenever [Plato] uses expressions that are plain and smooth and unfabricated, [his *lexis*] is utterly pleasant and agreeable. For it becomes sufficiently pure and limpid, like the clearest

of springs, and it is both precise and delicate compared to any other writing in the same mode.

But Dionysius' mimetic gestures give the lie to his claim about the simplicity of this style, since it sends him into his own luminous, place-specific transports, as if he himself were standing on the banks of the Ilissus, right where Socrates indulged in his Gorgianic arabesques. Not only does Plato's style when at its simplest become pure, sparkling, and clear – like that of a fine Hellenistic poet, for instance (*Dem*. 5.8–9); it also has a little of the patina and film of early styles, which "imperceptibly suffuses it and lends it a certain freshness and bloom and beauty in full flower" (*chloeron to kai tethēlos kai meston hōras anthos*, *Dem*. 5.12–14). Lest we miss the patent echoes of his similes and metaphors, Dionysius adds that Plato's style is such that it "gives off a pleasant breeze, like the most fragrant meadows" (*hōsper apo tōn euōdestatōn leimōnōn*).[20] And like the cicadas and Socrates' own Muses, this style is marked by "piercing clarity" (*to liguron*); like the grassy bank so perfect for reclining, it also possesses elegance (*to kompson*) (5.15–17).[21]

Dionysius thus resets the focus of Plato's *locus amoenus* by praising as his simpler style the very language – and in the very language – that Plato used to lampoon the elaborations of Gorgias and the poets before him. Because Dionysius wants to demonstrate Plato's failings as a speechwriter in contrast to Demosthenes, and yet also to indicate his affinity with Plato as a theorist, he adopts Plato's vocabulary as a way of asserting Demosthenes' pre-eminence. Indeed, he later contrasts Demosthenes' stylistic tactics with Plato's by means of a set of telling similes that, more overtly than Cicero's characterization of the "soft and shady" style, come straight out of Socrates' first speech in the *Phaedrus*. The techniques of the orator are as different, Dionysius declares, as "real from ceremonial weapons, actual sights from images, bodies trained by labors in the sun from those pursuing ease in the shade" (32.4–7). Socrates' first speech, which he later repudiates with a dramatic poetic gesture, identifies bodily *hexis* (*tēn de tou sōmatos hexin*) as a site of necessary supervision and lays out even more explicitly these same contrasts. In the process he reactivates Aristophanic jokes (cf. *Clouds* 1015–1019, 1171) on Socrates' own pallid, unexercised practices (Pl. *Phdr*. 239c5–d1):

[[The lover] can be seen pursuing someone soft and not tough,
who has been raised not in full sunlight but in the dappled shade,
inexperienced in manly labors and sweaty exertion, experienced
instead in the gentle and unmanly way of life …

Dionysius sets up these contrasts not only to disdain the philosopher's shady retreat, but also, again like Cicero, to imply that it harbors an effete and feminizing disinclination for the hardy labors of oratory. This is the trope of the pallid, idling chatterer – embodied most prominently by Socrates,

Euripides, and their followers – familiar since Aristophanes' *Clouds* and *Frogs*, which in some incarnations gets associated particularly with pastoral settings (e.g. *Clouds* 103, 119–120, 198–199, 505, 931, 1003; cf. *Frogs* 1492; *Acharn*. 429, 705; *Knights* 1381). The fact that later writers on rhetoric sustain this contrast speaks to its continuing centrality as a flashpoint for aesthetic and ethical conflicts between the hard-body qualities of oratory and the shady philosophical remove.[22]

For Dionysius, as for Cicero and his "shady style," these differences between bodies are also reflected in their favored settings. He follows up his disparagement of those pursuing leisure in the shade by opposing the "flowery meadow offering pleasant rest" (*anthērōi chōrōi katagōgas hēdeias echonti*) that characterizes Plato's style to the "rich and fertile field" (*eukarpōi kai pamphorōi gēi*) of Demosthenes' (*Dem*. 32.10–15). The one offers a perfumed but transient entertainment (*terpseis ephēmerous*), the other lacks neither the true sustenance of the farmer's well-tended plot nor its delights (*terpsin*) (cf. Quint. *Inst. orat.* 12.10.25). Plato should have left to more stringent writers the hearty vegetation of public speeches (cf. 32.19), although his readers may take pleasure in the less substantial resources to be found in his rural retreat.

And once again, mimetic engagement crafts the judgment. Dionysius' figurative contrasts mirror in reverse his stylistic ranking: these images also come directly from the *Phaedrus*. Toward the end of the dialogue Socrates employs an analogy to differentiate traditional from philosophical rhetoric: the window boxes that people cultivate during the festival of Adonis, which cannot compare to the fertile bounty of the farmer's well-sown field (*Phdr*. 276b1–8). The one offers quick but passing enjoyment, the other long, careful tending and sustained returns. The "farmer" who has wisdom will take those seeds he wants to grow into fruit, sow them carefully, and turn his "watering" (i.e. writing) to good use, so that they produce other plantings (276d1–277a4). For Socrates this writing is secondary, only a tool for memory, which means that Dionysius has again deliberately turned Plato's differentiation between a more superficial kind of rhetoric and philosophical investigation, so that his own style falls on the side of the window boxes: it is pretty but temporary, a festival adornment.

Conclusion: Dreams of Order

Gardeners arrange nature to suit human ideas of beauty. Gardens are thus aesthetic fantasies of sorts, marked by characteristics like order, unity, and fullness, as nature is not – or only is in human idealizations of it, as in its artful arranging (i.e. as a landscape). There are many ancient depictions of such cultivated plots, and they make up the rich man's subset of *locus amoenus* settings. The earliest example is that of Alcinous' garden on Phaiacia, where Odysseus is left to wait in his stealthy approach to the king's

palace. This garden – with its full and perfect complement of figs and grapes, flowers and streams – he gazes upon with wonder (*Od*. 7.133–134), just as Hermes does Calypso's magical scene. Its orderly abundance serves as a metonymic forecasting of the rich and well-organized world that Odysseus encounters within the Phaiacian palace, a quality reiterated by his own lavishly orchestrated storytelling.

At the other end of this tradition we find once again Proust, who repeatedly deploys the trope of "reading in the garden" at Combray as a means of lampooning the mundane toing and froing of the village's denizens and thereby offsetting (if wryly) the narrator's highbrow meditations on literary aesthetics. At the moment of initially activating this space of contemplation, the narrator refers to it as "the sacred grove" ("le bois consacré") surrounding the scullery, which he also antiquates as a "little temple of Venus" ("un petit temple à Vénus") (I.71). Proust's fanciful reader thus shapes his special place in the garden by associating it with ancient lyric and pastoral convention, with its repeated invocation of the sacred grove of poetry, and by setting it adjacent to the bounteous goddess of love.[23] Even this lightly drawn initial gesture underscores the centrality of landscapes and their flowery or fertile metonymies to the imaginative space that the narrator inhabits. From here this highly, sometimes ridiculously sensitive figure for the author culls the stuff of his literary aesthetics and so frames his world as a mimesis of fanciful perceptions and archaizing styles. That the space is also emphatically one of aristocratic privacy and leisure undergirds the narrator's territorial reach, since the jaunts of his imagination are made possible precisely by the privilege and education that his secluded milieu secures.

This renegotiation of the poet's mountainsides and meadows as a contained space of (inner) cultivation renders Proust a kind of latter-day Longus, whose final garden scene in Book 4 of *Daphnis and Chloe* charts yearnings for aesthetic order and yet also erotic play, while serving as a showcase for the writer's own elaborate representation. This garden, like that of Proust's narrator, carries an artificial overlay of preserved images – here in the form of the metonymic cluster of grapes saved for city visitors, so that they can indulge in the "image and pleasure" of the vintage (*eikoni kai hēdonēi*, 4.5.2). That this walled garden is the perfectly ordered preserve of its wealthy landowner and effectively set up in artistic imitation of more natural (if also cultivated) land use reinforces the sense that it is the representation that matters, a sense reproduced by the lush details of Longus' mimesis. While, as Zeitlin argues, Longus may earlier in the narrative explicitly align his aesthetic project with an older, rougher bucolic tradition, his narrator is also a city dweller who offers up this rich man's garden as a dream of aesthetic order that reproduces the four-part ordering of Longus' tale (Zeitlin 1994, 163). Once again, elite territorial dominion fosters the broad ambitions of the artist's landscaping and thus his aesthetic reach, so that the simpler shepherd's

garden described earlier in the narrative (2.1–8) is superseded by this grander scheme.

Such strategies open up many questions about the relations between aesthetic economies and inhabited settings – as well as between a thing and its artistic reproduction – that underpin claims to authority, class, and dominion. Some of these dynamics emerge from the act of witnessing or viewing itself, encouraging attention to who is doing the looking and what claims are being made about control and power in particular settings. Pilgrimages to sanctuaries and festivals also revolve around such visual events, whether these are actual or fictional, and lay similar claim to command over territories orchestrated by the convergence of aesthetic hierarchies and political economies. These engage viewers in coordinating embodiments of class, status, and inclination with spectacle and setting, again both actual and imagined. That such terrains shape and are themselves shaped by wonderment and reproducing helps to explain the central role that these inhabited landscapes play in ancient discourse about aesthetics. As their features are appropriated by masterful denizens such as the Pindaric performer or reacted to by intellectual tourists like Socrates and Scaevola, topographies become landscapes – that is, emerge as viewed from distinct ideological perspectives by influential viewers (again, see Mitchell 2002, 2). This is how particular configurations of aesthetic and ethical values come to dominate in cultural representation, fostering hierarchies of taste and inclination that insist, across centuries, on which topographies ought to be valued or denigrated, dismissed or enjoyed.

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FURTHER READING

Scholars of ancient literature have studied the cultural molding and aesthetics of Greek and Roman landscapes, and there have been many distinctive studies on various aspects of landscape imagery, largely as they occur in poetry. Some of these focus on settings in relation to poets' scenes of divine inspiration and initiation (e.g. Harriott 1969; Calame 1992; Murray 1992); discrete studies also treat path and road metaphors and/or springs and water imagery (e.g. Steiner 1986; Nünlist 1998). Others center on spaces such as meadows and gardens (e.g. Motte 1973; Giesecke 2007); and still others on the topos of the *locus amoenus* in particular (e.g. Curtius 1953, ch. 10; Elliger 1975; Hass 1998). While poetic landscapes generally receive the most attention in these studies, the one exception is the ever-evolving consideration of the setting of Plato's *Phaedrus*. This most recently includes that of Richard Hunter (2012), whose extensive work on ancient literary programs and criticism stands out for repeatedly drawing attention to significant poetic landscapes and their connections to aesthetic traditions (cf. Hunter 2006). On the *Phaedrus* setting, see also, for example, Wilamowitz (1919, 450–488); Lebeck (1972); Ferrari (1987); on the centrality of landscape aesthetics in literary criticism and theory more generally, see Worman (forthcoming).

NOTES

1 Although the phrase *locus amoenus* is Ciceronian in origin, there is little question that Plato appropriates this poetic commonplace when he has Socrates exclaim, as he looks upon the chosen spot beside the Ilissus, "By Hera, the resting place is certainly delightful [*kalē ge hē katagōgē*]" (*Phdr*. 230b2) (cf. Cic. *Verr*. 6.80; *Mur*. 13; *de Fin*. 2.107; *Att*. 12.19.1; *de Orat*. 2.290; *Epist*. 7.20.2). On the *locus amoenus* more generally, see esp. Curtius (1953, ch. 10); also Hass (1998).

2 Wycherley (1963, 90) makes reference to the Ilissian Muses (*Ilisiades Mousai*), citing Paus. 1.19.5, but we should recognize that Pausanias' descriptions do not constitute so much facts about the Classical landscape as later ancient reception of famous spots.

3 Scholars react to this setting with varying sensitivity, but see esp. Wilamowitz (1919: 450–488); also Lebeck (1972); Elliger (1975, 289–294). Wycherley discusses the discovery of a shrine to Pan (1963, 95; 1978, 172–173 [with plate]) on the southeast bank of the Ilissus across from Kallirhoe. A number of scholars locate the site of the dialogue here, as Wycherley notes (1963, 95–96), with objections.

4 Some think Socrates is making fun of Hippocratic exegeses as well (e.g. Ferrari 1987). *Kompsos* is a stylistic buzzword, made common currency by Euripides and Aristophanes. See Worman (2008, 133–135). Elliger (1975, 291) notes the usage and characterizes it as ironic "Spiel mit rhetorischen

Stielementen."

5 Lebeck (1972) notices the imagery and argues that it borrows techniques of depiction from lyric poetry.

6 On the influence of Plato's *Phaedrus*, see Hunter (2012).

7 Zeitlin (1994); see also Calame (2007). Cf. the *ekphrasis* in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, a painting of a colonnaded *locus amoenus* which also includes Eros and which setting the narrator reproduces at the outset of his tale.

8 Poetic and visual representations do not differentiate rape or seizure very strongly from marriage, as might be expected in traditional cultures dependent on the controlled circulation of women. On meadows and gardens, see Motte (1973, 38–47), Bremer (1975), and Calame (1992, 106–108).

9 Respectively, Aesch. *Prom*. 651–654; Soph. fr. 956 R; Aesch. fr. 99 R; *HDem*. See Bremer (1975).

10 Harriott (1969, 5, 20–23, and *passim*); on scenes of inspiration see Tigerstedt (1970), Murray (1992).

11 In Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* and Euripides' *Bacchae*, Pan is a denizen of Mount Cithaeron (*OT* 1100–1101; *Bacch*. 951–952).

12 For the nightingale's song as pouring forth from within the leaves, cf. Hom. *Od*. 19.518–521; Hesiod depicts the cicada in similar guise (*WD* 582–584).

13 *C'était, ce Guermantes, comme le cadre d'un roman, un paysage imaginaire que j'avais peine à me représenter et d'autant plus le désir de découvrir, enclavé au milieu de terres et de routes réelles qui tout à coup s'imprégneraient de particularités héraldiques* … [It was, this "Guermantes," like the setting in a novel, an imaginary landscape I could picture to myself only with difficulty and thereby longed all the more to discover, set amid real lands and roads that would suddenly become immersed in heraldic details …] (Proust *RTP* II.314, Éd. Gallimard 1987–1989; trans. M. Treharne 2002: 8).

14 On the conjunction of journeying and *theoria*, see Nightingale (2004, ch. 1).

15 Gutzwiller (1991, 73–79). Cf. later encounters such as the story of Archilochus and his cow (from the third century BC, fr. 51 Diehl); and also Pearce (1988, 282–287).

16 See, for example, the testimonium of Aelian about Stesichorus being the

first to compose bucolic songs about Daphnis' sufferings, which Page puts under the category "Spuria" (105 P).

17 See Hooker (1960), Slater (1986). Cf. Wycherley (1963, 1978). The topography suggested by *Frogs* overlaps significantly with that of the *Phaedrus*, a fact that (together with the significant presences of shrines to Pan and the nymphs) suggests a purposeful situating on Plato's part of Socrates in an appropriately pastoral literary critical setting.

18 Görler (1988, 222–223) notes the fictional setting and date (91 BC); he thinks that this is likely a mimesis of Cicero's estate.

19 But see, for example, Hunter (2012, ch. 4).

20 Cf. Pl. *Phdr*. 230b5, c2. Cf. also Plut. *De rect. rat. aud.* 41f.; *De comp. Arist. et Menan*. 854b11–c4, where he compares Menander's style to a flowering field.

21 Cf. Pl. *Phdr*. 230c2–3, 237a7. The language evokes not just the pastoral idyll of Plato's *Phaedrus* but also imagery from Archaic lyric, perhaps especially that of Sappho, as well as Alexandrian bucolic.

22 Epicureanism perhaps most especially (e.g. Cic. *De orat*. 3.63); but cf. again *Brut* 37–38, *Orat*. 63–64.

23 For example, Pind. *O*. 3.17–24, 8.9, etc. Following this: Callim. *HDem*. 25–30; Propert. 3.1.1–6, also 2.13.1–8; Hor. *Od*. 1.1.29–32; Ovid *Amor*. 3.1.1–14. See Hunter (2006, ch. 1).

CHAPTER 20
Conceptualizing the (Visual) "Arts"

Michael Squire

I begin this chapter with a quandary. Imagine a legal dispute between an artist who has painted a canvas and the owner of the canvas on which the artist has painted his picture. How should a court of law settle the debate: does the resulting object more properly belong to the proprietor of the original canvas, or instead to the painter responsible for the images depicted on it?

This is not simply a modern hypothetical dilemma. It also occupied some of the sharpest legal minds of later Roman antiquity (Madero 2010, esp. 1–14; cf. Carey Miller 1998, esp. 61–62; Elsner 1998, 241–243; Plisecka 2011). Different writers took different sides (Madero 2010, 15–18). A second-century AD jurist named Gaius is among the earliest extant authors to tackle the issue (*Institutes* 2.78). Strictly speaking, Gaius writes, one might think that the painted tablet belongs to the legal owner of the raw materials. After all, a house constructed on land registered to a second party belongs not to its builder but to the owner of the land on which it was built (2.73); similarly, if someone writes upon a manuscript – even if he writes in expensive golden lettering – the inscribed words are owned not by the person who wrote the text, but by the person who possesses the written-upon object, "since the lettering is accessory to the papyrus or parchment" (2.77). When it comes to *painting*, however, Gaius notes an apparent anomaly (2.78): "When someone has painted an image [*imaginem*] on a panel belonging to me [*in tabula mea*], the opposite view is held: the preferred opinion is that the panel accedes to the image. The reason supporting this distinction is hardly satisfactory [*cuius diuersitatis uix idonea ratio redditur*]."

Paulus, writing in the late second or early third century, picks up Gaius' complaint about this "hardly satisfactory" consensus. For Paulus, the nature or quality of the inscribed surface makes no difference: "whatever is written on my papyrus or painted on my board becomes mine immediately: although some believe otherwise when it comes to painting (on account of its price), a thing must necessarily accede to that without which it cannot exist" (cited in Justinian, *Digest of Roman Law* 6.1.23.3). When Justinian presided over a revision of Gaius' *Institutes* in the sixth century, by contrast, his jurists came down on the opposite side. Regardless of who owns the actual tablet, painting assumes a material existence in its own right – and one that trumps the conventional rules of accession (*Institutes* 2.1.33–34):

> If one person were to have painted on a board belonging to somebody else, some think that the board accedes to the picture, while others hold that the

> picture (whatever it may be) accedes to the board. To us, however it seems preferable that the board should accede to the painting. For it is absurd to think that a painting by Apelles or Parrhasius should be the accessory of a thoroughly worthless board [*in accessionem uilissimae tabulae cedere*].

Having recourse to two of the most famous Greek painters, Apelles and Parrhasius (active in the late fifth and fourth centuries), Justinian's jurists are explicit about the legalistic stakes: the act (not to mention the cost) of painterly creation transforms not only the appearance of a tablet, but also its legal ownership.

Whether one finds oneself agreeing with Gaius, Paulus, or Justinian, the very framework of discussion reveals something important about ancient – or at least late antique – attitudes to painting. We cannot be sure if any similar legal debate really arose in a Roman court; were such a case ever to have been argued, moreover, we do not know whether lawyers would have found themselves making a decision based on the specific merits of a given picture. But at least some Roman lawyers supposed that the value of a painting could supersede its material medium: it is not just its financial cost that made painting different from other sorts of decorative surface (as Gaius and Justinian note, the same consensus does not hold for expensive writing in gold; cf. Madero 2010, 76–83); rather, painting is judged to have a significance *in and of itself*. "What the whole debate clearly demonstrates," as Jaś Elsner concludes, "is that art was inextricable from the issue of quality, and that quality came down to the special skill of the artist's hand" (Elsner 1998, 243).

But Is It "Art"?

Such hypothetical disputes make for an appropriate opening to any reflection on Greco-Roman attitudes to (what we call) the "arts." Among scholars and students of (Classical) "art history," there has been much debate as to whether and when we can talk about "art" from a historical perspective. The question is fundamental: if our languages (and hence conceptual frames) for thinking about "art" are modern and anachronistic, how should we analyze the different experiences of viewing in ancient Greece and Rome?

Neither Gaius, Paulus, nor Justinian talk about "art" or "aesthetics" per se. Likewise, none of these writers compares the qualities of painting to those of other visual media: interestingly, the only analogy is with "writing" (something with which painting is contrasted as much as compared) – there is little mention of (what we would deem) a comparative legalistic problem concerning sculpted stone or worked metal (although cf. P. Stewart 2003 , 56 on Justinian, *Digest of Roman Law* 6.1.23.2–6). For all these differences in ideological framework, however, our jurists nonetheless comment upon something which they see (or, just as revealingly, do *not* see) as

phenomenologically special about painting: informing their legalistic discussions is an assumption of inherent value.

But what kind of "significance," "quality," or "value'? This chapter cannot attempt to excavate all the ways in which painting – or indeed other visual media – came to be conceptualized in Greece or Rome: the limitations of space preclude against anything more than a highly selective survey. And yet, even were a whole companion dedicated to ancient ideas about painting and sculpture, we would still, I think, find ourselves grappling with irreconcilable ideas. However one chooses to interpret the overarching categories, Greco-Roman "antiquity" had no more singular or coherent idea of "art" (or even "painting" or "sculpture") than "modernity": to read ancient texts is to give voice to a miscellany of different views. To put the point differently, we must assume that one and the same sculpture or painting could always give rise to a myriad of different interpretative frameworks (cf. e.g. Elsner 1995, esp. 1–14; Kampen 2002, esp. 377–378); indeed, our opening legalistic soundbites already demonstrate as much, reflecting a variety of at once collaborative and conflicting viewpoints.

With these issues in mind, my reflections on the "visual arts" in this chapter center around three overlapping aspects. I begin with contemporary disputes about this label "art," exploring what such debates have meant within the disciplinary frames of "Classics," "Classical archaeology," and "art history." After charting the rise of different cultural discourses for theorizing images in antiquity, above all in the Hellenistic world of the third century BC onward, the second section proceeds to examine some different attempts to write "histories" of painting and sculpture, focusing on Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (published in the 70s AD) in particular. Third and finally, I turn to consider ancient rhetorical traditions of comparing personal "styles" in painting and sculpture with individual modes of verbal expression. In the interests of space, I again concentrate on a single first-century AD Roman case study (Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*). My larger interest, though, will be with the comparative and analogical ways in which painting and sculpture were considered not only as parallel phenomena, but also in parallel with the arts of speaking and writing. As we shall see, such concern with comparing visual with verbal media stretches all the way back to the very earliest discussions of images: as such, it proves fundamental to any reflection on how the visual arts were themselves reflected upon in Greece and Rome.

Let me begin, then, by saying something more about modern critical debates. When it comes to analyzing ancient ideas about "art" – as indeed about other areas of cultural and intellectual activity, like ancient systems of "economics" (see Ian Morris's introduction to Finley 1999, ix–xxxvi), for example, or else "sexuality" (see Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1990, and compare Foucault 1972, esp. 22) – scholars can be broadly segregated into two camps, sometimes labeled "modernists" and "primitivists" respectively (Tanner 2006,

12–19; 2010; Squire 2010a). On the one side are those who assume – or indeed purposely advocate – broadly parallel notions of "art" between modernity and antiquity: according to this model, modern ideas of artistic autonomy and creativity find their conceptual origin in ancient Greece and Rome. A whole number of factors sustain the idea: by their very nature, modern museums and galleries tend to turn ancient materials into aestheticized objects (Karp and Lavine 1990; Beard and Henderson 1994), for example; similarly, financial markets for buying and selling antiquities continue to judge (and price!) objects on the basis of their assumed aesthetic merit. Given the influence of Classical materials on the course of subsequent Western architecture, sculpture, and painting, it can prove very difficult *not* to think that ancient ideas map neatly onto those of modernity (and vice versa): the sheer ubiquity of Classical images only accentuates the impression of a single, continuous artistic tradition (cf. e.g. Greenhalgh 1978; Haskell and Penny 1981; Prettejohn 2012).

The disciplinary frame of "art history" has itself often conspired with such "modernist" assumptions. Ever since Johann Joachim Winckelmann effectively coined the notion of an "art history of antiquity" in his landmark book of 1764 (*Die Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*: see Winckelmann 2006), our "histories" of ancient art have tended to assume that contemporary aesthetic criteria on some level align with those of antiquity (Potts 1994; Pommier 2003); in one sense, our essentializing language of "art" is at conceptual odds with the historicist talk of "history." From the eighteenth century onward, the disciplinary pursuits of "Classical archaeology" have long made "art" out of ancient material objects: whether one looks to Adolf Furtwängler's late nineteenth-century attempts to reconstruct the "masterworks" of Greek sculpture from surviving Roman copies (cf. e.g. P. Stewart 2003, 231–236; Marvin 2008, 137–150), or indeed to the "connoisseurial" methods of studying Attic vases developed by Sir John Beazley, attributing objects to an array of named and unnamed "artists" (cf. Elsner 1990; Shanks 1996, 37–41; Whitley 1997), Classical archaeologists have often worked on the basis that their own ideas about art mirror those circulating in Greece and Rome.

Faced with this essentializing "modernist" backdrop, other scholars have suggested a radical difference between ancient and modern theories and practices of art. Particularly important has been the work of émigré German Renaissance scholar, Paul Oskar Kristeller. In an essay first published in 1951 and 1952 (combined and revised in Kristeller 1990, 163–227), Kristeller argued that our "modern systems of the arts" originate in the eighteenth century, and that as such they are hopelessly anachronistic for understanding materials from (among other historical times and places) ancient Greece and Rome. "The various arts are certainly as old as human civilization", Kristeller writes (1990, 226), "but the manner in which we are accustomed to group

them and assign them a place in our scheme of life is comparatively recent." Kristeller's argument here conflates a weak and a strong claim: on the one hand, his thesis is that our conceptual groupings of "arts" are an eighteenth-century invention; on the other, he suggests that "aesthetic autonomy" itself is something modern and culturally peculiar (Squire 2010a, 137–139; cf. Osborne 2010, 234–235; Porter 2010a, 26–40). Fundamental to both claims is Kristeller's observation that there was no cognitive or critical vocabulary for conceptualizing the "arts" of painting and sculpture in antiquity (Kristeller 1990, 170–171; cf. Shiner 2001, 22–24): the Greek term *technē* connotes a much broader range of technical "craftsmanship," just as Latin *ars* encompassed a spectrum of meanings relating both to the organization of specific skills and to their material results (cf. Pollitt 1974, 32–37). Where many modern scholars continue to talk of "master" artists and their "personal styles" (e.g. Palagia and Pollitt 1996) – even, following Beazley's example, inventing names when none are known (e.g. Richardson 2000) – ancient writers did not fetishize the creative "genius" of "artists" in the same sorts of ways (cf. e.g. Bianchi-Bandinelli 1957, with response by Guarducci 1958; Squire 2013b; the key contribution is Schweitzer 1925).

If not ancient, where did these ideas about "art" and "artists" come from? For Kristeller, the key conceptual turning point was grounded in the Enlightenment: it was only in the eighteenth century, Kristeller argues, that the "arts" of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry were first grouped together into a collective conceptual whole, bound up with larger concepts of taste, genius, and the creative imagination. This explains why Greek and Roman writers know "of no Muse for painting or of sculpture: they had to be invented by the allegorists of the early modern centuries" (Kristeller 1990, 174):

> Thus classical antiquity left no systems or elaborate concepts of an aesthetic nature, but merely a number of scattered notions and suggestions that exercised a lasting influence down to modern times but had to be carefully selected, taken out of their context, rearranged, reemphasised and reinterpreted or misinterpreted before they could be utilized as building materials for aesthetic systems. We have to admit the conclusion, distasteful to many historians of aesthetics but grudgingly admitted by most of them, that ancient writers and thinkers, though confronted with excellent works of art and quite susceptible to their charm, were neither able nor eager to detach the aesthetic quality of these works of art from their intellectual, moral, religious and practical function or content, or to use such an aesthetic quality as a standard for grouping the fine arts together or for making them the subject of a comprehensive philosophical interpretation.

Kristeller's thesis has found numerous supporting voices in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, perhaps none louder than that of Larry Shiner

(Shiner 2001, 2009; cf. Porter 2009a, 2–4 and Squire 2010a, 137–144). A number of different scholars have consequently tried to explain the particular rise of aesthetics within the cultural frameworks of the eighteenth century (e.g. Bourdieu 1987; Abrams 1989, esp. 153–158; Eagleton 1990; Mattick 1993, 2003). Other art historians, by contrast, have situated the "invention" of art less in the eighteenth century than in the cultural shifts of the fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance (Belting 1994), or else in the theological upheavals of the German Reformation (Koerner 2004).

Such debates are not merely of intellectual historical interest; they also have tangible disciplinary consequences, affecting how – and indeed where – "Classical art" is studied. In institutional terms, the "uneasy balancing act" (Tanner 2010, 267) between "modernist" and "primitivist" positions must determine whether one considers the study of Greek and Roman objects as belonging more properly to a department of "Classics," "archaeology," or "art history" (Squire 2010a, 140–143; cf. Neer 2010, 6–11; Squire 2011b, 375–377; 2012): according to one trenchant "material culturalist," "Classical art history is … archaeology, or it is nothing" (Whitley 2001, xxiii; cf. idem 2012, 595), just as another scholar, rallying against any segregation between the "'art history of antiquity' and 'classical archaeology'," insists that the "separation of art and material culture is an invention of modernity" (since the "real-life functions" of "ancient "artworks" were partly fulfilled by objects that today have scarcely to do with our concept of 'art'": Hölscher 2002, 13, translated). Archaeologists have good reasons for distrusting the underlying ideological claims about "art" (cf. Scott 2006). Quite apart from any intellectual qualms, the aesthetic value invested in certain sorts of archaeological object has led to the wholly *un*-archaeological plundering, looting, and destruction of sites, with the result that key contextual information about provenance is lost (e.g. Brodie and Tubb 2002). Precisely because certain sorts of archaeological objects are treated as aestheticized *objets*, there has been financial gain in the illicit trading of antiquities. Perhaps the best documented example is the illegal excavation of Cycladic figurines, fueled by the aesthetic appreciation of (and emulation by) self-defined "artists" like Henry Moore in the twentieth century (Gill and Chippindale 1993). But all manner of Greek and Roman sites have been pillaged so as to furnish black markets with "beautiful" pots, sculptures, and jewelry: "surfacing without secure information beyond what is immanent in themselves," as two archaeologists put it, "the objects are unable to broaden our basis of knowledge" (Chippindale and Gill 2000, 504).

Among "art historians" too, debates between "primitivists" and "modernists" have gone hand in hand with a broader set of intellectual shifts during the late twentieth century. In the same way that many archaeologists have preferred to talk about "material culture," over the last 20 years many "art historians" have rebranded their field in terms of "visual culture" (Bryson, Holly, and Moxey

1994; see Squire 2009, 79–87 for further bibliography). One impetus here has been the desire to broaden out the subjects of "art historical" analysis – not just to concentrate on objects considered to be of "high artistic" merit, but also to include the wider field of "visuality" in any given cultural frame (cf. Foster 1988; Nelson 2000). No less important has been the larger ideological critique of "art" per se: if our very frameworks for thinking about "art" are anachronistic, do we not need to define materials in a more "neutral" way?

As with most binary models for thinking about the ancient world, there is an inherent problem in approaching questions of Greek and Roman "art" in exclusively "modernist" or "primitivist" terms. What has always made studying Greco-Roman antiquity so engaging is its ability to seem so "near" to our conceptual ideas on the one hand, and yet so differently distant on the other (Beard and Henderson 2000, esp. 6). Questions of "art" prove no exception.

In his 2006 book *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece: Religion, Society and Artistic Rationalisation*, Jeremy Tanner has championed a closely related point (Tanner 2006). While the specific practices and institutions of theorizing "art" differ between the ancient and modern worlds, Tanner argues, there are nonetheless family resemblances between them – resemblances which, when carefully scrutinized, "render the ancient and modern practices mutually intelligible" (Tanner 2010, 268). Tanner exploits a variety of sociological perspectives to explore the rise of Greek and Roman discourses about images and their production, above all Talcott Parsons' concept of art as "expressive symbolism" (cf. Tanner 2006, 20–21), and Max Weber's theories of "cultural rationalisation" (cf. Tanner 2006, 21–29). "The final outcome of this process …," Tanner concludes, "was the production of art with a rather purely aesthetic and art-historical orientation, primarily for connoisseurs and collectors" (Tanner 2006, 302).

Integral to Tanner's approach is his systematic emphasis on chronological change and development within antiquity: "'ancient thought and practice' is not a unity, but undergoes substantial historical development between, say, the beginning of the Classical period and the end of the Hellenistic period (and indeed beyond)" (Tanner 2010, 275). For Tanner, the ancient "rationalization" of art ultimately begins with the so-called "Greek revolution" of the late seventh century BC onward. Experimenting with new forms of visual expression, above all new and increasingly "naturalistic" modes, sixth-century sculptors and painters developed new ways of figuring the human body, first in imagining the gods (Tanner 2006, 31–96), and subsequently in the context of human portraits (ibid. 97–140). Such visual innovation went hand in hand with new ways of thinking about images as well as about those who made them: by at least the middle of the fifth century BC, we can be sure that sculptors themselves were writing treatises about their own individual innovations (the most famous example being Polyclitus,

whose written *Canon* is known only from later fragmentary soundbites: cf. A. Stewart 1978; Berger 1990; Pollitt 1995). Despite this cultural and intellectual shift, Tanner argues, contemporaries did not see fifth-century sculptors or painters as "artists" like we do: for a variety of cultural, intellectual, and institutional reasons, the activities of these practitioners did not receive the same degree of autonomous "rationalization" that they have done in other historical times and places (ibid. 140–204; cf. Tanner 1999, 2005; on Renaissance ideas of the artist as genius "creator," see especially Kris and Kurz 1979). Due partly to the civic and political structures of city-states like Athens, and partly to the broader development of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy (Tanner 2000; 2006, 141–204), the production and critique of images remained embedded within particular social and political contexts: there was no concept of "art for art's sake."

By the late fourth and third centuries BC, Tanner continues, something seems to have changed. The political upheavals of the Hellenistic world revolutionized the institutional frameworks in which artistic "agency" came to be understood and theorized (Tanner 2006, 205–276). Similarly, the development of new spaces for visual display – public arenas like the Library at Pergamon or the Mouseion at Alexandria, as well as more private and domestic spaces – contributed to the rise of new elite languages of visual appreciation (some of which have already been explored by Graham Zanker in this volume; cf. e.g. Onians 1979, esp. 53–94; Goldhill 1994; Prioux 2007, 2008). To talk of "art" per se might still be anachronistic: the conceptual frameworks which emerged in the third and second centuries remained indebted to the rationalist frameworks of Classical Greek philosophy, which directed the discussion of visual representation around larger issues of *mimēsis* (Lodge 1953; Janaway 1995; Besançon 2000, 13–62; Halliwell 2002; Denham 2012; note, though, the revisionist critique of Porter 2010a, esp. 405–450). Even in the Roman world, Tanner adds, art was never "rationalized" to the same extent, or in the same ways, that it was in later Western Europe. Yet what slowly emerged in the Hellenistic, Roman, and so-called "Second Sophistic" world were dominant sets of prescribed discourses concerning "reasonable ways of looking at pictures," in turn affecting the sorts of images produced (Tanner 2006, 277–302). This explains the development of new modes of display and appreciation – not only the sorts of Roman "galleries" and "museums" already analyzed in this volume by Agnès Rouveret (see e.g. Chevallier 1991, 132–77; Rutledge 2012; along with Elsner 2007, 177–199 on a literary pastiche in Petron. *Sat*. 83–90), but also the removal of so many Greek works to Rome (Pollitt 1978; Coarelli 1983; Boschung 1989; Bounia 2004; Miles 2008; Rutledge 2012, 31–77). For Tanner, this changing discourse also accounts for a new sort of "connoisseurial" interest in painting and sculpture (Tanner 2006, 255–76), not least the Roman quest to fill domestic spaces with "decorous" artistic subjects (cf. Neudecker 1988, 1998; Bartman 1991; Leen 1991; Marvin 1993; Tronchin 2012).

Pliny and the Forgings of "Art History"

Within a *Companion to Ancient Aesthetics*, one of the most striking aspects of Tanner's chronologically nuanced narrative (2006) is its intersection with related discourses pertaining to other media. Some might take issue with certain aspects of Tanner's argument (cf. e.g. Platt 2010 , esp. 212–213 on the religious underpinnings of Hellenistic "art history," or Osborne 2010 on Archaic and Classical artists, both with responses in Tanner 2010, 276–281, 283–288). Nevertheless, the general account of how practices and theories of the visual arts broke increasingly free from their earlier political and religious frame aligns with what we know about the "aesthetic" critique of other media, in particular Hellenistic evaluations of poetry and rhetoric (cf. e.g. Kennedy 1989; Ford 2002; Hunter 2009). If, as Simon Goldhill argues, "Hellenistic culture is where 'art history' as a discipline first develops" (cf. Goldhill 1994, 205; cf. e.g. Männlein-Robert 2007, 10), it is also where we find poetry and other texts being systematically scrutinized, with ancient scholars debating and evaluating their respective literary merits in newly constructed libraries (cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 87–104; Blum 1991, 95–123; and more generally Gutzwiller 2007, 2010).

So in what sorts of ways did Hellenistic writers themselves "reflect" upon art and its history? In answering that question, we are faced with a conspicuous problem of evidence. Although we know the names of some of the most important Hellenistic critics to have written about sculpture and painting in the third century BC – in some tantalizing cases, even the titles of their treatises – the texts themselves have not survived (see Tanner 2006, 212–214 and Lapatin 2012, 279–280 for further bibliography). Following the precedent of a fifth-century sculptor like Polyclitus, painters such as Apelles and Parrhasius (among others) are known to have written technical treatises about their work in the fourth century. Other practicing artists and critics seem to have extended that tradition, charting broader histories of sculpture or painting, sometimes even considering challenges and developments across media. There are some Classical precedents for such thinking: one might compare, for example, a fascinating passage from Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in which Socrates set out to interrogate a painter, sculptor, and armorer in turn about the uses – and limits – of their respective crafts (*Mem.* 3.10: cf. Preisshofen 1974, 38–40; Goldhill 1998, esp. 207–210; Steiner 2001, 33–35). Yet the dedication of whole works to the critique of painting and sculpture seems to have been a new departure. Although, as we have said, the likes of Plato and Aristotle talked about visual media in the context of their larger theories of *mimēsis* (see especially the chapters by Hariclia Brecoulaki and Paul Woodruff in this volume), their underlying assumption had been that, due to their material forms, the visual arts were qualitatively inferior to those

of poetry: Aristotle might have defended painting against the problematizing proscriptions of Plato, but he did not dedicate a self-contained treatise to painting in the same way that he did to *Poetics*.

Among the numerous Hellenistic writers who wrote about painting and sculpture, two names perhaps stand out in particular (Tanner 2006, 213–14; cf. Linfert 1978; Settis 1995b; Hardiman 2012, 269–270). The first – and perhaps most important – is that of Xenocrates (cf. Pollitt 1974, 74–7, with further bibliography; the key discussion remains Schweitzer 1932). A practicing sculptor, Xenocrates is known to have written separate treatises on sculpture and painting alike. His work most likely analyzed some of the different technical problems inherent in each medium, developing a critical vocabulary that was equally pertinent to both. Still more importantly, it has been argued that Xenocrates chronicled the ways in which different artists responded to such challenges, providing histories not just of sculpture and painting, but perhaps also of sculptors and painters. Unlike Xenocrates, a second critic named Duris does not appear to have been a practicing artist (cf. Pédech 1989): among his attested writings are historical works as well as treatises on literary criticism, very much in the Aristotelian mold. But Duris is also known to have dedicated whole treatises to *On Painting* and *On Sculpture*, developing new frameworks for their systematic critique and evaluation.

Because nothing by the likes of Xenocrates or Duris survives, scholars have to piece together earlier Greek works from later Latin sources. For those interested in the Hellenistic "invention" of art history, one text has played a particularly important role: Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, published sometime in the 70s AD (i.e. some three centuries after Xenocrates and others). Pliny dedicates the final five books of the *Natural History* to (among other things) the manufacture of images; in doing so, he certainly had access to earlier Greek writers (as his various indices reveal, frequently naming earlier Greek sources: Pollitt 1974, 73–74). As a result, one scholarly mode of reading Pliny's text has been to raid it for evidence of Hellenistic Greek sources: to use Pliny as a mean of reconstructing those earlier "art historical" works from which the *Natural History* is thought to derive (e.g. Kalkmann 1898; Schweitzer 1932, esp. 47–52; Pollitt 1974, 73–81).

But does the *Natural History* amount to anything like "art history" as we understand it today? Given Pliny's impact on all subsequent Western narratives of art history – above all, his influence on Vasari's *Lives of the Artists,* first published in 1550 (Becatti 1972; Settis 1995a; Barkan 1999, 65–117; Isager 2003; McHam 2013) – it has been all too easy to deem Pliny a prototypical "art historian." From our own perspectives in the twenty-first century, however, the intellectual frameworks of Pliny's *Natural History* can seem as alien as they do familiar: although some scholars have extracted relevant sections and presented them as "the Elder Pliny's chapters on the

history of art" (Jex-Blake and Sellers 1896), and while others have tried to disentangle Pliny's supposed combination of, for example, "professional," "rhetorical," and "popular" criticism (Pollitt 1974, 9–72; cf. idem 1990, 1–6; Hardiman 2012, 268–70), Pliny's attitude to painting and sculpture reveals a rather different ideological agenda.

For anyone reading the *Natural History*'s "chapters on the history of art" today, what is most striking about Pliny's comments is their framing within "what is for us an entirely different topic, the taxonomy and technology of metal and stone" (Gordon 1979, 7; cf. de Angelis 2008, with survey of bibliography at 80, n.5). Even within each book, issues of figural representation take their place among a larger catalogue of questions. To appreciate that strangeness, one need only run through the order of contents. The thirty-third book of the *Natural History* announces its topic to be "metals," and proceeds from the precious to the base, taking in the full history of their extraction and functions along the way. Continuing the discussion, book 34 examines metal alloys, especially copper and bronze: Pliny charts first the geographical history of bronze casting, and then its uses, which include statuary (Pliny structures his account according to a number of different frames, including alphabetical lists of sculptors, e.g. *NH* 34.72–83); this in turn gives way to a description of the alloy process, its by-products, and other alloyed metals (including iron, lead, and tin). The move from the thirty-fourth to the thirty-fifth book is flagged explicitly: having treated the "nature of metals," Pliny now proceeds to "various kinds of earth and stones," which leads him first to the history of painting (*NH* 35.2–28); the ensuing discussion includes a description of different pigments and their extraction (chs 29–50), a prosopographic history of various painters (chs 53–148), and finally an analysis of other representational forms and their materials (encaustic painting, plaster modeling, pottery, etc.). In book 36, Pliny turns to "the nature of stones," discussing raw materials, their different uses, and the (primarily Greek) stonemasons and sculptors famous for working with them. By extension, book 37 – the last of the *Natural History* – is concerned with gemstones, including those ornamented with engraved decoration.

Rather than forge any *single* "history of art," then, the *Natural History* constructs its analysis around different media, treating each type singularly and in turn (despite numerous interconnections between his separate discussions). One consequent response to the *Natural History* has been simply to criticize its structural framework (for bibliography, see Carey 2003, 7–10; Tanner 2006, 235–246, esp. 235–236). We are here back with the "modernists" again: according to this mode of interpretation, there *was* such a thing as "art history" in the first century AD, but Pliny simply garbles that earlier tradition – whether because of his own ideas, or on account of some inherited Roman "bourgeois" taste (cf. e.g. Heuzé 1987, 34–36). This seems a somewhat warped way of approaching Pliny's text: if we are to understand

Pliny's thinking in the *Natural History*, we must surely proceed on the basis (and in the order) of what Pliny tells us; this means reading his text carefully, not simply using it as a stepping-stone to reconstruct the sources at Pliny's disposal. Read from this perspective, the *Natural History* emerges as a work intricately bound up with the cultural ideologies of its author. As recent commentators have pointed out, there is a clear (and distinctly imperial) ideological agenda to Pliny's structural frame (Rouveret 1987, 1995; Carey 2003, 17–40; Murphy 2004, 1–25). Tackling each medium, and subsuming the different materials within its "encyclopedia" of words, the *Natural History* aims at circumscribing a whole world of knowledge: to quote Pliny's preface, the work is said to contain some 20,000 noteworthy facts and to summarize 2000 earlier volumes (*NH* Pref. 17).

This quest for "encapsulation" provides one rationale for Pliny's encyclopedic interest in visual materials. But still more important is the *Natural History*'s concern with "nature" itself (André 1978; Wallace-Hadrill 1990; Isager 1991; Beagon 1992). As the very title of Pliny's magnum opus suggests, nature comprises his dominant theme: "Nature, that is to say Life, is the subject of my narrative" (*Natura, hoc est vita, narratur*: *NH* Pref. 13), Pliny writes in his preface (likewise ending his final book with a framing hymn to "Nature, the mother of all things": *parens rerum omnium Natura*, *NH* 37.205). Such an intellectual frame, shaped above all by Stoic ideas about the sovereignty of nature, has consequences for Pliny's own moralizing agenda (cf. Tanner 2006, 236–238). At the same time, it impacts upon the sorts of stories Pliny recounts about artistically wrought works of nature.

Pliny's overarching interest in nature also helps to explain his critical judgments of painting and sculpture, as well as the evaluative language in which he frames them. Because nature rules supreme in Pliny's universe, the images which he judges to be qualitatively "best" are those that align with nature itself. Anecdotes about (what we call) "naturalism" abound: consider Zeuxis' described painting of grapes, said to be so "real" as to deceive birds into flocking around it (only trumped by Parrhasius' painted curtain which deceives Zeuxis himself: *NH* 35.65; cf. Bann 1989, 27–40; Carey 2003, 109–111), or else the story about Apelles' painting of a horse before which other horses neigh (*NH* 35.95; cf. Tanner 2006, 243–245). Some scholars have associated such anecdotes with "popular" ideas about image-making in the ancient world (Pollitt 1974, 63–66; Hardiman 2012). But we can be sure that this overarching critical framework accords with a much longer philosophical and critical tradition of theorizing visual replication, and one which permeated the most erudite of literary circles, not least in the context of Hellenistic epigrams on art works: one thinks, for example, of the numerous Greek epigrams dedicated to Myron's bronze statue of a heifer – so lifelike that it might prompt a bull to mount it, a calf to attempt suckling at its udders, or a gadfly to sting its bronze-encrusted skin (*Palatine Anthology* 9.713–742, 793–

798: see Squire 2010b, and compare, for example, Fuà 1973; Gutzwiller 2002; Squire 2010c). The *Natural History* is well aware of such erudite critical responses: indeed, when discussing Myron, Pliny even refers to the "heifer" epigrams explicitly (*NH* 34.57–58).

"Naturalism" takes on a much larger critical significance in the *Natural History*. If Pliny's concern with nature directs his critical evaluation of painting and sculpture, it also shapes his overarching histories of painted and sculptural representation. Although segregated across different books, Pliny's accounts chart a series of related discoveries, focusing on those of fifth- and fourth-century Greece in particular (Pollitt 1990, 3–4; Tanner 2006, 240–242): each and every innovation may be associated with individual practitioners, and yet every new technique and invention also advances art's "progress" by bringing it closer (albeit via a miscellany of different means) to the ultimate models of nature.

The way in which Pliny "embeds" his account of image-making within his larger encyclopedic project has a significance for "primitivist" and "modernist" views of ancient art alike. On the one hand, it is important to realize that Pliny's interest in images forms part and parcel of his larger concern with nature: for all his evaluative judgments, Pliny's discussions are directed not by a sense of "art for art's sake," but rather by a broader intellectual interest in mankind's interactions with the natural world. On the other hand, this conceptual frame has itself exerted immeasurable influence on more modern frameworks of art history, and in at least two distinct ways. First, Pliny's "evolutionary" model has directed subsequent attempts to narrate the history of image-making in terms of progressive innovation, above all once again in the Italian Renaissance (Squire 2011a, 32–68; cf. Gombrich 1971; Isager 2003; McHam 2013). Second, and perhaps still more decisively, the "naturalistic" criteria championed in the *Natural History* have long remained a yardstick for measuring the progress of Western (and indeed non-Western) image-making (cf. Layton 1977). Despite his intellectual removal from many of our more modern-day assumptions, in other words, Pliny's text has constituted a paradigm for Western theories of art, no less than for Western modes of charting its history.

The Rhetoric of Criticism

Although our most detailed source about ancient artists and their works, Pliny's *Natural History* is by no means the only ancient text to talk about sculpture and painting (for an excellent recent survey, see Lapatin 2012). In each case, we find comparable issues of "embeddedness": whether we look to Vitruvius' fleeting discussions in the context of architectural construction (Vitruvius was himself a practicing architect: cf. esp. McEwan 2004), or else to Pausanias' important discussions of individual monuments and statues in

the Greek world of the early second-century AD (Arafat 1996; cf. esp. Elsner 2007, esp. 29–66), we find visual materials being discussed not in and of themselves, but rather in connection with other areas of cultural activity.

This is particularly true when it comes to Greek and Latin rhetorical discussions of sculpture and painting. Such interest in comparing verbal forms with visual exempla stretches all the way back to the Classical period (and indeed beyond: Benedikston 2000 provides a good introduction): we find it in Aristotle's analogy between the "ethical" subjects of poetry and painting (referring to painters like Polygnotus, Paison, and Dionysus: *Poetics* 1448a), for example, as well as in Pseudo-Demetrius' *On Style*, where so-called "compact" and "disjointed" rhetorical styles are compared with sculptural traditions before and after Pheidias (*de Eloc.* 14). Other Hellenistic rhetoricians went even further, likening the personal style (*lexis*) of an individual painter or sculptor to the expressive modes of different orators and writers (cf. Pollitt 1974, 81–48; Pollitt 1990, 221–234 presents a number of important sources in translation). One of the most revealing examples comes amid Dionysius of Halicarnassus' first-century BC comparison of Isocrates and Lysias (*Isoc.* 3: cf. Benediktson 2000, esp. 114–116; Tanner 2006, 252–253): Isocratic oratory can best be likened to the craftsmanship (*technē*) of sculptors like Pheidias and Polyclitus, Dionysius explains, whereas the speeches of Lysias more closely resemble the sculptural works of Calamis and Callimachus. Dionysius' comparative mode of judging sculptural styles might remind us of Pliny's own practice of evaluating different sculptors and painters (e.g. *NH* 34.58). What is different about Dionysius' analysis, though, is the way in which he throws *words* into the syncretic fray: different sculptors can be compared and contrasted not only with each other, but also with orators – hence the shared visual and verbal critical language of, for example, "grandeur" (*semnotēs*), "delicacy" (*leptotēs*), and "grace" (*charis*).

This is not just a Greek phenomenon. Latin authors developed a related rhetorical framework, integrating it within whole histories of literary and artistic styles. Discussing the "insufficiently" polished style of Cato, for example, Cicero points out that any evaluation is always colored by hindsight: he proceeds to draw a comparison with other historical judgments about developments in sculpture and painting alike (*Brutus* 69–70: cf. Preisshofen and Zanker 1970/1971; numerous other important passages are discussed by Benediktson 2000, 95–108).

Still more explicit is Quintilian, writing immediately after Pliny the Elder in the late first century AD. Artistic comparisons loom large in Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*: in charting the ideal educative path for an orator, Quintilian finds himself drawing frequent analogies between the artifice learned by rhetoricians on the one hand, and that practiced by painters and sculptors on the other (Becatti 1951, 178–191). Perhaps Quintilian's most revealing discussion comes once again in the context of theorizing oratorical

style (*Inst. Or.* 12.10: cf. Austin 1944; Pollitt 1974, 81–84; Perry 2002, esp. 161–162). The explicit subject is how to evaluate "types of speaking" (*genera orationis*). But before describing oratorical styles and their history of development, Quintilian embarks upon a sustained parallel between painting, sculpture, and oratory. When it comes to analyzing the works (*opera*) of different sculptors and painters – as indeed those of different orators – all judgment is said to be relative: there is no single answer as to whose styles are qualitatively "best." "The reason why the perfect orator does not yet exist (and perhaps also no perfect art) is not only because different qualities predominate in different individuals, but also because no single form has pleased everyone," Quintilian explains; "this is partly due to the conditions of different times and places, and partly because of the tastes and aims of each individual" (12.10.2).

This evaluative backdrop provides the setting for Quintilian's comparative history of painterly (12.10.3–6), sculptural (12.10.7–9), and oratorical styles (12.10.10–15). Beginning with "paintings worth looking at for reasons other than their antiquity alone," Quintilian, like Pliny, tells a story of chronological progress, taking in painters like Polygnotus, Aglaophon, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, Protogenes, Pamphilius, Melanthius, Antiphilus, Theon, Apelles, and Euphranor along the way. Just as Quintilian associates each successive painter with a different formal or abstract quality, so too does he recount a related narrative about sculpture, making comparisons between different groups of artists: early sculptural styles (those of Callon and Hegesias) are "rather stiff" (*duriora*), Quintilian explains, whereas those of Callias are "less rigid" (*minus rigida*), and those of Myron are in turn yet "softer" still (*molliora*); progressing through the fifth century, Polyclitus' work is subsequently characterized by its "craftsmanship and grace" (*diligentia ac decor*), but the sculptures of Pheidias and Alcamenes nevertheless possess something that Polyclitus' sculptures lack; by contrast, Lysippus and Praxiteles in the fourth century are said to have achieved the best approximation of reality (*ad ueritatem … accessisse optime adfirmant*), whereas Demetrius was "more enamoured with likeness than with beauty" (*similitudinis quam pulchritudinis amantior*).

As with Pliny's *Natural History*, one widespread scholarly response to Quintilian's discussion has been to delineate (and in turn reconstruct) the different Hellenistic sources from which his analysis derives (Austin 1944; cf. idem 1948, 135–137; Pollitt 1974, 58–63; Rouveret 1989, 451–453). Others have tried to make sense of Quintilian's comments in terms of the broader "language of Roman art." According to Tonio Hölscher, Quintilian's critical reflections can be shown to map onto a broader "abstraction of content" in Roman sculpture: his account demonstrates how different painted and sculptural styles served systematically to embody different qualities and ideas, each associated with divergent subjects and genres (Hölscher 2004, esp. 86–

101, with further comparanda; cf. Elsner 2006, esp. 274–276).

For our purposes, Quintilian's discussion might be said to demonstrate two more important lessons. The first concerns Quintilian's explicit comparison *between* the fields of painting and sculpture: where, as we have seen, Pliny the Elder segregated different media across different books of his *Natural History*, Quintilian explicitly combines the two, arguing that "the [stylistic] differences in statues are the same" as we find in paintings (12.10.7). Second, and perhaps still more important, is the analogous framework which Quintilian assumes for conceptualizing painting and sculpture on the one hand, and verbal styles on the other (12.10.10). The analogy is set up right from the beginning, as when Quintilian likens differences between "Tuscan" and "Greek" statues to the differences between "Asiatic" and "Attic" oratory (12.10.2). Indeed, nowhere is it more explicit than when Quintilian talks about the parallel agencies to which different "types of works" (*operum genera*) are attributed: applying ideas of literary authorship and agency to the visual arts (and vice versa), Quintilian argues that paintings, sculptures, and speeches have comparable sorts of "authors" (*auctores*, 12.10.2). The analysis that follows teases out the underlying point, interweaving languages of rhetorical and artistic critical appreciation: whatever else we make of Quintilian's discussion, the very terminology in which it is conducted – its vocabulary of *diligentia*, *pondus*, *ueritas*, *auctoritas*, *facilitas*, and so on – encapsulates the shared aesthetic stretching between crafted words on the one hand, and crafted images on the other.

This "mutual translatability" (Tanner 2006, 252) between frameworks of conceptualizing the visual and verbal arts is of the utmost importance within the present Companion. As is well known, Greek and Roman authors drew a sharp distinction between the social status of artists and that of writers: those who made a living with their hands could rarely (if ever) aspire to the cerebral pursuits of literary production (cf. Squire 2015 on Lucian's *The Dream*). At the same time, however, ancient writers were quick to posit a correlation between the arts of creating and viewing objects on the one hand, and those of crafting and responding to speech on the other. The tradition stretches all the way back to the beginnings of both Greek art and literature. We find its archaeology in the prototypical Homeric "ekphrasis" – the description of the shield crafted by Hephaestus for Achilles in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*, which playfully collapses the "sights" of images into the "sounds" of poetry, and vice versa (*Il.* 18.478–608: cf. Becker 1995; Squire 2013a). Already in the sixth century BC, Simonides vocalized the fundamental topos in his famous analogy between painting as "silent poetry" and poetry as "speaking painting" (Plut. *Mor.* [*De glor. Ath.*] 346f: cf. Carson 1992; Sprigath 2004; Männlein-Robert 2007, 20–22). Within the post-antique Western critical tradition, it was Horace's formulation of *ut pictura poesis* ("like a painting, so is poetry") that would enshrine the sentiment (*Ars P.* 361–365: cf. esp. Hardie 1993;

Benediktson 2000, 127–139; and more generally Hagstrum 1955). But the underlying thinking can be traced in all manner of archaeological and literary materials – from sculpted early imperial tablets depicting poetic subjects, which knowingly pitch words against images (see Squire 2011b), to literary traditions of set-piece "ekphrastic" description (cf. esp. Elsner 2002), themselves expressly theorized in ancient handbooks of rhetoric (which define ekphrasis as "a descriptive speech which vividly brings the subject before the eyes": see Webb 2009). Within the Greco-Roman world, and across a remarkably extensive time frame, reflecting on images meant reflecting on the at once collaborating and competing parallel resources of language.

Conclusion: Discourse and Cultural Capital

This has been a necessarily broad-brush survey. One recurrent theme of my chapter has concerned the simultaneous similarity and difference between "ancient" and "modern" systems of conceptualizing the visual arts. At the same time, we have also seen the inherent problems of segregating the two: wherever we turn, we find ancient traditions shaping modern ideologies, and in a miscellany of ways.

How we make sense of these various ancient testimonia will ultimately depend on our own ideological perspectives. What is so remarkable about the range of surviving materials is their ability to support *different* reflections on ancient "art." This is true of the ancient voices assembled in this chapter as a collective. But it also applies to single, individual writers. While some aspects of Pliny's *Natural History* can strike us as alien and other, other parts can appear wholly "modern" and familiar (as when Pliny talks about the need for silent "appreciation" before artistic *opera*: *NH* 36.27, with discussion by e.g. Bartman 1991 , 82). Our sources are not only fragmentary, in other words; they are also multifaceted, even (to our eyes) inconsistent – much more so, I think, than many scholars have been willing to concede.

Allow me to end, however, with a different final "reflection." For all their different interests and conceptual frames, there is a recurrent sense among Hellenistic and Roman authors that images could be exploited as an opportunity for parading education and status. By the time of Lucian and other so-called "Second Sophistic" Greek authors in the second century AD, we find the thinking vocalized explicitly. The "ordinary" man (*idiotēs*) may flap his hands around before a picture, Lucian writes in the introduction to his staged description of a "hall," but the "educated" man (*pepaideumenos*) prefers talking to silence, "reciprocating the image with speech" (*On the Hall* 2): "visual judgment lies not in the act of looking," we are told, "but a rational eloquence also concurs with what is seen" (*On the Hall* 7: cf. Goldhill 2001, 160–167; Newby 2002; Squire 2009, 239–247). From one perspective, such comments attest to a markedly different ideology of "art" from those

championed by post-Kantian aesthetic traditions: "the Greek *pepaideumenos* did not stand in awed silence before the sublime," as one scholar puts it (Goldhill 2001, 161 n.29; note, though, how Lucian's view proves at odds with the Plinian soundbite cited in the previous paragraph). From another perspective, passages like this illuminate a certain sociological continuity: they demonstrate the "cultural capital" invested in both ancient and modern discourses alike (cf. esp. Bourdieu 1984). Whatever else we make of them, ancient reflections on images, like our own in the modern world, were also *socially* embedded: then, as now, knowing the right critical language was – and is – a way of flaunting social and cultural distinction.

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FURTHER READING

There are numerous compendia of “sources and documents” pertaining to the visual arts in Greco-Roman antiquity. The most substantial is Overbeck (1868), structured first around different media, and second around individual artists: Overbeck collects the key Greek and Latin texts, albeit without translation (a new, revised and expanded edition, with German translations, is forthcoming in Hallof et al. (ed.) 2014 [*non vidi*]). More accessible to students are Pollitt (1983) and (1990), dedicated to Greek and Roman materials respectively, and analyzing an array of texts translated into English (with

detailed guides to bibliography). For ancient writings about sculpture, Stuart-Jones (1895) and A. Stewart (1990, 237–310) are still useful, as is Muller-Dufeu (2002) (translating Overbeck's sources into French); Reinach (1921) (republished in 1985 with an introduction by Agnès Rouveret) and Koch (2000) attempt something similar for painting. For specific Greek and Latin critical terms, Pollitt (1974) is indispensable (complete with introduction dedicated to different strands of what Pollitt – rather problematically – labels "professional criticism," "art criticism in Greek philosophy," "rhetorical and literary criticism," "popular criticism," and "Roman variants," 9–71). For an excellent survey of the different literary generic frames in which Greek and Roman authors turned to visual subjects, see Lapatin (2012) (with detailed bibliographic suggestions). Specifically on issues of "art and taste" in Rome, Becatti (1951) offers a neat one-volume guide, structured around individual Latin authors (and complete with an appendix of key texts on pp. 299–453).

For the whole question of visual "art" in Greece and Rome – and the rise of corresponding critical languages for theorizing it – the best, chronologically structured discussion is Tanner (2006), with subsequent thematic discussions in Platt and Squire (2010). Neudecker (1988, esp. 91–104) provides a useful survey of ancient textual materials, and Settis (1995b) also offers an overview of their the modern historiography (albeit, frustratingly, without references). Kristeller's arguments about the "modern system of the arts" are most accessible in Kristeller (1990, 163–227): for two impassioned recent responses, centered around ancient materials in particular, see especially Porter (2009a) and Shiner (2009) (with response in Porter 2009b; cf. Porter 2010, 25–40; Peponi 2012, esp. 1–13).

PART III
Aesthetic Issues

CHAPTER 21
Mimesis

Paul Woodruff

Basic Account of Mimesis

The Greek word *mimēsis* is usually translated as "imitation," although it carries a wider range of meanings, and the Greek word has simply passed into English by transliteration. Typically mimesis is a deliberate human activity, carried out by an agent, yielding a product that shares some features with its original. The product (or *mimēma*) may be an artifact, such as a painting, a behavior, such as speaking with a certain accent, or a technical practice, such as medicine. Indeed, any of the things human beings do or make could be a product of mimesis. The original could be even more various – a person, a natural object or process, an artifact of human manufacture, or a Platonic entity. The feature that is shared between product and object could be an attribute, an appearance, a type of action, or an effect.[1]

I use these four expressions to provide a bare-bones theory of mimesis: in any case of mimesis, we should be able to identify an agent, an original, a product, and shared features. If we can do this for most authors and contexts, then these four features provide us with a formal account of mimesis. Different cases of mimesis may have different kinds of aims, however. They may also use different methods, and they may execute mimesis in a variety of media – including meter, music, dance, sculpture, painting, stage acting, and real life.

We must not begin with Plato. The word had a set of uses before it fell into the hands of philosophers. Here is a brief review of uses of the word in major classical authors.

Following examples. The center of gravity of the words' many uses outside philosophy appears to be following examples – doing what other people properly do:[2] in mimesis, an agent takes actions (the product) that follow the example of someone else's proper actions (the original) so that the two sets of actions share certain features. For example, if you hold a position of authority, and you exercise it cruelly for your own gain, then you are mimetic of tyrants – doing what tyrants properly do. Dressing up like a tyrant you have seen is not mimetic in the same way; dress does not make a tyrant. What a tyrant properly does (in my definition) follows from the definition of tyrant.[3]

In such a case, mimesis may occur without conscious imitation or representation – without duplicity or pretense, and without relying on the gap between appearance and reality. The agent is not representing selfish cruelty, but actually doing things that are selfish and cruel. The agent may be doing

this sincerely, and may even do it more effectively than the original.

The tyrant example comes from Thucydides 1.95.3, where the historian reports that the Spartans called Pausanias home because his actions were closer to those of a tyrant than those of a general; apparently, they found fault with him not because he was a copycat of a tyrant, or because he was pretending to be a tyrant, but because he was actually doing what tyrants do (see the similar usage at Herodotus 4.166).

This sort of mimesis – doing what others do – can be good, of course. Herodotus says that Kleisthenes followed his grandfather's example (5.6). Thucydides has Pericles point out that other cities follow the example of Athens, rather than vice versa (2.37). In Euripides' *Hercules Furens*, the hero's wife says that she must not fail to follow her husband's example (294). Similar usages occur in Euripides' *Electra* 1037, *Hippolytus* 114, and Aristophanes *Wasps* 1019. Mimesis is used of stealing another's figures of speech in *Clouds* 559.

The word is used also for adopting another's customs (*tropoi*) at Euripides *Helen* 940, and in Thucydides of resident aliens adopting the customs of Athens (at 7.63.3).[4] In the *Birds* of Aristophanes, we are told that humans have been so impressed by the birds' success that they have adopted the customs of birds. The point is brought home through a series of dazzling puns (1285). Similarly, in *Clouds*, Strepsiades tells his son that if he is going to do what roosters do, by attacking his father, he should follow roosters' example all the way, and eat shit (1430).

We shall see that this usage is not alien to Plato; one of his chief concerns about mimesis is that young people will follow bad examples and adopt bad ways of life, if they are invited to take part in mimesis. This sort of mimesis is as good or as bad as the originals on which it is based – with one important reservation. If you try to follow a wide range of examples, even if each one of them is good, then you may not succeed in adopting any way of life at all. Mimesis does not necessarily lead to counterfeiting, but mimesis of originals that compete with one another will lead to falsehood of some sort. If you set out to follow the example of a man on one day, and a woman on the next, you will fail in at least one case to be truly what you seem to be. The falsehood may not be intentional, but it is inevitable. It is due not to mimesis as such, but to the multiplicity of its objects. Acting parts in the theater may have this perverse result.[5]

Parody. Mimesis occurs also when one person apes the behavior of another by way of parody, to get a laugh. So, in Xenophon, a man reduces a drinking party to laughter by performing a crude imitation of a lovely dance by a beautiful boy (*Symposium* 2.21), and in Aristophanes' *Wealth* (291) we hear of a parody of the Cyclops, also meant to cause laughter. In this category belongs Dionysus' mimesis of Heracles in the *Frogs* (109). In such cases the

humor comes from reproducing some aspects of the original's appearance, leaving enough discrepancies that the result is absurd. It would not be absurd if the man had danced as well as the boy; that would have been surprising and wonderful. Parody succeeds only when it is not deceptive: we know the ugly man is not a lovely boy; if he deceived us, we would not laugh. This distinguishes parody from playing a part; you may play a part with the intention to deceive (and you may succeed), but you cannot bring off successful parody by deceiving your audience into thinking you are the original of your parody.

Playing a part. Mimesis occurs when one person plays the part of another, as in theater. In comedy, Agathon dresses like a woman in order to present a woman's speech, and probably to compose it as well (Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazousae* 155–156), and a character offers to take the part of Helen in the same play (850; cf. *Wealth* 306, 312). In such cases, the agent is an actor, the original is a character in a performance, and the product is the actions that share features with the actions we would expect the character to take in the circumstances represented. In this case, the original may be a matter of history; for example, an actor could play the part of an historical character, delivering a well-remembered funeral oration. Or the original could be created in the performance; in that case the performance leads us to imagine an original for the mimetic action. This does not entail deception in comedy; Agathon is not fooling anyone (except perhaps himself).

Although Agathon does not intend to deceive, he is presenting a false appearance. He is following the example of women in the hope of acquiring, for the time of his performance, their way of speaking. Keep in mind that the appearances in such performances are only partly false; although it is false that Agathon is a woman, it is true that he is speaking in falsetto. And the effect of his speech on an audience may (indeed he hopes it will) be truly similar to the effect of a similar speech by a woman.

Imaging. Some images serve as reminders, like the wooden model of a human corpse – exactly like a real one in appearance – carried around at Egyptian banquets as a *memento mori* (Herodotus 2.78), and the wooden images on the covers of mummies are painted so as to look real (2.86, cf. 3.37). Here, the sculptor-painter has produced an image by mimesis that looks like the original – the corpse. Product and original share an appearance. But they share more – an effect, or at least part of an effect. Carrying a corpse through the banquet might have a more chilling effect if the banqueters knew it was real. But if they are deceived by the image and believe it to be real, then the effect on them will be the same, to remind them that they are subject to death.

This effect is similar to that of action on the tragic stage, which also serves to remind an audience of its mortality and vulnerability. On stage, at least, there is no confusion: the corpses are not real. But their effect is at least partly that of real corpses. The absence of deception in staged tragedy may be what

allows for tragic pleasure. When we recognize mimesis for what it is, then we may enjoy it, while still learning from it the terrible truths it reveals.[6]

A mimetic image may reveal truth in a dream. When the mother of Paris Alexander dreamed he was a firebrand (*dalou pikron mimēma*), she was close to the truth, because he was to ignite the war that led to the burning of Troy (Euripides, *Trojan Women* 922). And Heracles achieves a mimesis of a blacksmith with the blow that kills his second child (*Hercules Furens* 992).

Some images, however, are dismal failures, as is pointed out in the *Lysistrata* 159, apparently referring to imitation sexual organs, which cannot have the full effect of the originals.

Summary. Most generally, then, mimesis is doing something someone else does (as the general with the tyrant or the old man with the boy), or having an effect that something else has (as the image with the corpse). None of the cases of mimesis discussed so far is essentially deceptive. Most do not depend on shared appearances, but some do. In one spectacularly imagined case – that of the false Helen – an image is supposed to be so close to the original as to deceive completely. Indeed, the false Helen was supposed to be so convincing that Teucer thought the real Helen was a fake (Euripides, *Helen* 74), and later skeptics would use the example to refute dogmatic theories of perception. But such a case lies well outside normal usage.

Mimesis in Plato

Plato brings new ethical and political concerns to mimesis; in the light of these concerns he is ambivalent about mimesis. Perhaps mimesis has different qualities in different contexts, as is reasonable, or perhaps Plato's views change during his career. In an early context, he treats a case of mimesis as pretending, but in a much later context he declares that mimesis can have the effect of knowledge. In the *Republic*, most famously, he observes that following examples – the main type of mimesis before Plato – may corrupt the young if the examples are bad. Later in the same work he points out that images may be deceptive, especially if they are made by the ignorant for the ignorant. In contexts in which Plato is critical of mimesis, he emphasizes the production of appearances by mimesis; in contexts where he is positive about mimesis, he emphasizes the closeness that may obtain between mimetic product and true original.

In the *Republic*, Plato targets literary mimesis. Book 3 examines a special case of mimesis that occurs when a poet impersonates a character by writing a speech for that character, or when a performer impersonates the character by performing the speech. Book 10 outlaws the ignorant sort of mimesis that harms the soul by exciting inappropriate emotions and aiming at pleasure rather than truth. In the *Laws* and elsewhere he recognizes that mimesis can be good if based on knowledge. There he develops rules for a city that maintains

itself through song and dance, all of which belongs to a good sort of mimesis. "We say that all music produces likenesses and is mimetic," the term "music" here embracing melody, rhythm, poetry, and dance (*Laws* 668a6–7). Plato's thinking about mimesis may have evolved as his thinking developed, but a close look at the texts suggests that his views on mimesis are roughly consistent.

Pretending. In the *Gorgias* Socrates advises Callicles on what the *demos* requires of a lover, that is, a demagogue (513b3–4). The *demos* (common people) wants its friend to have the same character that the *demos* has – crude, uneducated, cowardly, and changeable: "You can't merely pretend to have the same character as the demos," Socrates says, "you actually have to be of a similar nature to theirs" (*ou gar mimētēn dei einai all' autofuōs homoion toutois*). This poses a dilemma for Callicles: either he is pretending to have the character of the *demos*, and will fail, or he really has their nature, in which case his claim to superiority is a sham. This is the point at which he will falter in his own defense (513c4–5). In effect, Socrates is saying: "You can't fake being vulgar, you really have to be vulgar in order to succeed in democratic politics." I have not found any example before Plato of such a clear case of mimesis as pretending. In this case, the pretending is ineffective; Socrates implies that the people will see through it.

Literary and musical mimesis. Poets tell stories, and they may do so in any of three ways – through mimesis, through narrative, or through a mixture of the two. Dramatic poets work through mimesis, while epic poets such as Homer provide a mixture of narration and mimesis (*Republic* 3, 394b8–c5, cf. 392d5–6). Here, mimesis means the composition or performance of direct speech. The agent composes and/or performs a speech that shares an appearance with a speech we would expect to hear from a character (the imagined original).

Poetic composition is mimetic in this usage when it purports to repeat actual words of a character. In reporting Chryses' entreaty to the Greeks, Socrates says, Homer "speaks as if he himself were Chryses, and tries as hard as he can to make us think it is not Homer speaking, but the priest, and he an old man" (*Republic* 393a7–b2). Homer is not impersonating Chryses to an audience; instead, he is composing a speech he wants us to think was spoken by Chryses, and he uses mimetic techniques to lead us to think so. Aristotle will offer a theory about how this is done – through the use of likelihood. The poet makes it seem likely to us that Chryses said such words, and since we have no historical fact to depend on in this case, we must depend on what is likely (*eikós*).[7] Pure narrative includes no direct speech and so avoids the necessity of this sort of mimesis.

Performance is mimetic when one speaker takes on the appearance of another, and this is sometimes now called impersonation. "Likening oneself to another in voice or appearance is mimesis" (*Republic* 393c5–6). "I think that when someone takes his own body or voice and makes yours seem very similar to

his, this is best called mimesis" (*Sophist* 267a6–8).

The educational system outlined in *Republic* 3 will permit poetry when it is mainly narrative and involves mimesis only of good people acting well, that is, safely and sanely (396c5–e8, 398a8–b4). Here Socrates' main concern is to ban performance (398a1–4); writing as such is not his target, but we should keep in mind that all poetry was composed to be performed in Plato's time. Socrates' reason for restricting mimesis in this way is the same as his reason for assigning different kinds of work to different kinds of people. Human nature is such that one person cannot perform different sorts of work well, and the same goes for mimesis of different sorts of work (395b3–6). Young people in training to be guardians must not be allowed to practice inappropriate trades; they must have no part in mimesis of slaves (395e5) or metal workers or anyone who works on ships (396a8–b2).

Let us pause to see what Socrates means here by mimesis in the light of the word's general usage. In the context of practical education, Socrates wants students to turn out to be suitable guardians – that is, not the sort of people sailors are – since even combat sailors are of a lower class than the military caste to which the guardians are to belong. The danger lies not in mere appearance, and not in pretending to be sailors, but in adopting a sailor's way of life by following the example of sailors. Socrates' concern is in line with the traditional use of the word. In the context of poetry, Socrates probably means that the young people will not be allowed to play the parts of sailors in the chorus of a play. He is not afraid that they might look like sailors, but that they be like sailors. Students must not be allowed to follow the example of sailors or adopt their ways. The young guardians will not be like modern boy scouts, who earn merit badges by practicing basic skills belonging to a number of crafts. Young guardians are being prepared for one line of work only, and that is defending the city.

Music is mimetic also, and will be restricted in the educational program of Book 3 (399e8–400a1). Melodic scales are permitted only if they are mimetic in either of two ways: of the tone and rhythm of a courageous person who is acting suitably in war, or of someone taking moderate, voluntary action in peacetime (399a5–c4). If music calms you, then it acts upon you in the way that a calm (*sophron*) character would act on you. Rhythm should be taken from the speech of one whose life is orderly and brave.

What could it mean to say that melodic scales and rhythms are mimetic? My hypothesis is that music is mimetic of a virtue of character in that it can produce on the soul an effect that is similar to that of the virtue. Martial music makes you feel brave, calm music makes you feel calm, and so forth. In music the agent makes a product that shares features with the original; the effect of the music is a set of feelings similar to those that produced the virtue in action, although the two may not be alike in other ways.

Ignorant, pleasure-seeking mimesis. In the last book of the *Republic*, Socrates goes beyond restricting mimesis in the context of education, as he does in Book 3. Here he bans mimesis entirely unless it is accompanied by the knowledge that would prevent its harming a soul. The target is larger now: His surgery of the arts in Book 3 was selective; now he cuts out the entire tragic tradition from Homer through the tragic poets. No exceptions are allowed either for pure narration or for the mimesis of good people.

Here the use of mimesis as pretending (which we saw in the *Gorgias*) surfaces again. Poets and other mimetic artists are charlatans who pretend to be wise; the mimetic poet is a magician [*goēs*] who deceives simple people into thinking he is wise in all things (598d2–5). The poet's pretense is not strictly a case of mimesis, because there is no one who is really wise in this way, no one for him to impersonate. No one is wise in all things.

Socrates in Book 10 seems to treat all mimesis as tainted by the ignorance of those who practice it, as well as the ignorance of their audiences. A popular audience seeks pleasure; mimetic artists who try to give pleasure will be pulled away from the truth. All they need to know, it seems, is how to please the people. "The mimetic art, being worthless itself, connects with something worthless [the non-rational parts of the soul], and produces worthless offspring" (603b4). This attack on mimesis is based on the example of painting: you can paint a bridle without knowing anything about what makes a bridle good or bad. That is because "the maker [*poiētēs*] of an image [*eidolon*], an imitator [*mimētēs*], knows nothing about what is, but only about what appears" (601b9–10). In the same way, poets in the tragic tradition can tell of the actions of heroes and gods in their poetry without knowing whether those actions are good or bad. "Then shall we lay it down that all poets starting with Homer are imitators of the images of virtue and their other subjects, without grasping the truth?" (600e4–6). Imitators do not even have true opinions about the qualities of the originals from which they work (602a8–9).

This is a new claim about poetry. We saw at the start that image making was relatively rare as a meaning of "mimesis" in classical texts. Book 3 used mimesis in a fairly traditional way, for following examples and adopting customs. But Book 10 takes painting images as central to mimesis and seems to generalize from that.[8]

In the larger context of Plato's work, however, we cannot say that all mimesis is tainted; I will turn to positive uses of the term in the next section. Book 10 is not a global attack on mimesis as such; it is a criticism of the poetic tradition from Homer down through the tragedians. The criticism is that they are as ignorant of virtue as painters are of the uses of the things they paint. Defenders of poetry might hope that Plato leaves room for a better sort of composition, and Plato holds out some hope for the defense (607d6–e2). But poets who could pass muster with Plato here would have to be very different

from the tribe of Homer; they would have to learn to please their audiences while being useful and beneficial for the civic constitution and human life generally. Unfortunately for poetry, pleasure and utility do not go so easily together.

Homer and his successors go wrong by aiming at pleasure – not simply by being mimetic. Pleasure-giving mimesis is easier to produce and to appreciate than mimesis based on knowledge of the truth; that is why poets tend to promote pleasure (implication of 604e1–605a6). Pleasure-giving mimesis is a mutilation (*lōbē*) of thought, unless knowledge of reality serves as a protective drug (*pharmakon*). When it aims at pleasure, poetry produces images of inferior people – that is, of people whose character is excitable and variable, because such people are interesting to observe. On the other hand, people of a character that is rational and calm are hard to present through images that an audience can understand (604e1–605a6).

In sum, Plato has two charges against poetry in Book 10: (i) Mimetic poetry makes images that are removed from truth; (ii) these images appeal to the inferior part of the soul that needs to be controlled by reason; mimesis strengthens this part, while destroying or crippling reason,[9] and it does so even in decent people (605a8–c8). As a result, Plato proposes to ban from Kallipolis all poetry other than hymns to the gods and praise of good people (607a3–5).

Close reading of the text shows that Socrates' target is not mimesis as such, but pleasure-seeking, ignorant mimesis. Mimesis in itself has no value good or bad. It is bad when it misrepresents the truth, especially by celebrating bad behavior. But the argument of Book 10 does not foreclose the possibility that mimesis can be good, as it would be if it were faithful to the truth.

Knowledge-based mimesis. Plato will come to represent philosophers as the true poets, as the only proper practitioners of mimesis. "We ourselves (the law-givers) are poets of the finest and best tragedy possible; our entire *politeia* is a mimesis of the finest and best life" (*Laws* 817b2–5).

In the *Timaeus*, mimesis is the ideal relation between sound thought or speech and the divine reality we observe in unchanging celestial motion; through philosophy, we apply the stability of the heavenly motions to our own wandering thoughts (47b2–c4). The original is stable celestial motion, and the product is stability of thought. We are the agents, and the common feature is stability.

Opposite to the pretending of the *Gorgias* context – at the other end of Plato's spectrum – are laws that are mimetic of the truth. Plato's criticism of mimesis in *Republic* 10 was based on his observation that mimetic artists find it easier to aim at pleasure than at accuracy. Later, in the *Statesman*, he will consider a different sort of mimetic artists – law-givers who know the truth and represent it in law, who will appear again (as we have seen) in the *Laws*. Laws may be

products of a mimesis of the truth, if they are written down, as truly as they possibly can be, by those who know (*Statesman* 300c5–6). Here the original is the truth, probably the truth about justice, the products are the laws, the agents are the law-givers, and the shared feature is usefulness in effecting good order in the city: the good order achieved by these laws is as close as possible to the good order that could be achieved by divine governance. Such laws do not wear the appearance of truth. There is no pretense about them. They are mimetic of truth because they come as close as possible to ruling a city in the way that those who know the truth would rule, if such experts were available to rule the city. The product in this case has part of the effect that the original would have. The rule of such laws is second best to direct rule by the experts themselves (or by the god), but, in the absence of experts, it is the best we can have (cf. *Laws* 817b).

In the *Laws* Plato discusses accurate mimesis in the context of music, song, and dance. Here, for the first time, he gives an account of accuracy in mimesis. An accurate product of mimesis is of the same quantity and quality of the original (668b6–7). A sound judge of mimesis knows three things: what the original of a work is, whether it has been correctly made, and whether it has been well made in language, melody, and rhythm (669a8–b3). Knowledge, not pleasure, must be the judge.

Dance may be mimetic of good people both at war and at peace (*Laws* 814d8–816d2). Dance is mimetic of both action and character. The dance of war shows how good warriors act, while also presenting a visual representation of their character. The dance of peace is a *mimema* of good bodies and good souls – that is, souls that are sound-minded (*sophron*) and take only well-measured pleasures (814e8–9, 815a7–b1). Because the original – good character – never changes, the products should not change either. Innovation is forbidden.

All of Plato's positive, knowledge-based uses of mimesis depend on these principles: agents of mimesis should choose an original that they know to be good, and they must insure that the products of their mimesis have at least some of the good qualities of the original object.

Aristotle

Aristotle follows Plato in treating the arts as essentially mimetic, but without Plato's severity. Aristotle uses the same structure for mimesis as Plato, but allows a wider range of purposes for the genres of mimesis. Moreover, a weakness of mimesis for Platonists turns out to be a strength for followers of Aristotle. Mimesis generally does only part of what its original does, so mimesis may be no more than second best – as Plato observes when the original is governance by a god or an expert, and the product is a set of laws. The same gap between mimesis and original allows Aristotle to say that

everyone enjoys mimesis. If the original is a web of horrifying events, such as are represented in tragedy, then withholding part of the effect of horrifying action would be a kindness to an audience (as Aristotle might make explicit, but does not). In the same way, we are lucky to have only part of the experience of seeing a disgusting animal or corpse, through pictorial mimesis, without facing the real thing (*Poetics* 1448b8–12). Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not measure mimesis by its closeness to truth, but rather by effects such as pleasurable emotions in the case of tragic poetry. And even less like Plato, Aristotle concedes that mimesis can in some cases do better than its original, as when medicine follows the example of nature, but improves upon it. Nevertheless, Aristotle's basic concept of mimesis is the same as Plato's.

The Defense of Poetry. Because Plato attacks tragic poetry, and Aristotle takes a positive view of the genre in his *Poetics*, scholars since ancient times have been tempted to read the *Poetics* as a defense of poetry against Plato, specifically as a defense of mimesis against the arguments of *Republic* books 3 and 10.[10] Such readings may distort Aristotle's text. They may also miss Plato's main point in Book 10, which was that mimesis ought to be based on knowledge. Mimesis as such needs no defense against Plato; what needs a defense is mimesis that deviates from the truth. Aristotle allows such deviation almost as an afterthought in the *Poetics.* He appears not to think that truth-less mimesis needs a defense, and so he appears not to have Plato's arguments in mind.

On other subjects and in other texts, Aristotle argues against Plato's positions directly, making it clear that he is doing so (for example, in *Politics* 2.1–5). In the *Poetics*, by contrast, he does not allude to Plato's positions even obliquely, and he does not use of Plato's conceptual machinery; for example, the distinction Aristotle makes between kinds of poetic mimesis does not match Plato's.[11] Aristotle is primarily working out his own theory of poetry here, rather than reacting against his teacher's.

Mimesis and nature. Medicine and architecture are mimetic of nature, according to Aristotle. The human agent, owing to professional knowledge, is able to do in effect what nature does – to subordinate a process to an end or goal, and in some cases to reach one of nature's goals, such as health, by human means (*Physics* 194a21, 199a15). In the case of medicine, the agent is a doctor, who produces the practice of medicine by mimesis of nature, the original is natural healing, and the shared feature is the effect of health – real health, not a *mimēma* of health. The *mimēma*, or mimetic product, is the practice of medicine, which is modeled on natural processes. The effects of nature and of medicine may be exactly the same, or, if nature fails to heal, medicine may succeed beyond nature.

Mimesis and plausibility. Mimesis in the arts differs from mimesis of nature in some cases by communicating what Halliwell calls "intelligible images of what it is reasonable, though not unproblematic, to term a 'possible world'"

(Halliwell 2002, 154) – what I have called the imagined original for mimesis. This is true of literary mimesis, which – unlike the arts that follow nature's example – takes, as its original, actions that are either likely or necessary, whether or not those actions have actually occurred. Unlike medicine, literary mimesis is representational and often creative. Literary mimesis sets itself free from the truth (as we shall see), but it cannot be free from likelihood and necessity.

Likelihood and necessity (*eikós* and *ananke*) govern the plots that an audience will accept as plausible. Aristotle insists on plausibility in literary mimesis because only plots that are so governed will engage an audience's emotions, as Aristotle believes tragic poetry must do. Once we see that literary mimesis aims at engaging emotions, we realize that nature – human nature – is again a factor. Here Aristotle's concern is audience response. Tragic poetry aims to affect us with pity and fear in much the same way as actual events would naturally affect us,[12] except that mimesis somehow filters out the pain of these emotions or overbalances them with mimetic pleasure.[13]

Mimesis and character. Through music and dance, mimesis builds character, according to Aristotle. There is a natural way to build character, through actions of a certain sort, and this natural process can be replicated through the arts (*Politics* 8.5):[14] "In tunes themselves there are *mimemata* of types of character, and this is evident, for right away there are different natural harmonies, so that listeners are affected in different ways." The idea that music can serve in the mimesis of character is at least as old as Plato (e.g. at *Republic* 399a ff., *Laws* 812c). But why should musical mimesis be character building? A likely answer is that feeling the pulse and tone of courageous music is mimetic of feeling courage itself. Aristotle's courage (as Brüllmann rightly argues) consists in having certain emotions; music can evoke feelings that are structurally similar to the emotions that constitute courage,[15] along with enough mimetic pleasure to help us want to feel the real thing. Courageous music does what courage properly does – it makes us feel a certain way. And doing what something else properly does is a kind of mimesis.[16]

Mimesis and fiction. A distinguished contemporary philosopher treats mimesis as fiction (Walton 1990). Fiction as such is not a concept used by Aristotle, although he may be adumbrating it, as Halliwell suggests (2002, 166 and in this volume). Fiction as we understand it is not exactly the same as mimesis. A mimetic poet may put actual events on the stage, but he must do so in a way that respects *eikós* and *ananke*, so that the actions on stage are plausible enough to the audience to engage their emotions. The successful poet of history, then, may be said (in our terms) to fictionalize history by arranging it in a well-constructed plot (*Poetics* 1451b29–32). The same would go for myth, though Aristotle does not distinguish between history and myth. What we call fiction is a made-up story; Aristotle's point is that mimesis is

indifferent to how much of a story is made up. What matters is that the story be plausible, or, in a word, lifelike – lifelike enough to engage real emotions in the audience. Making a story emotionally engaging is the essence of literary mimesis for Aristotle.

Mimesis and truth. The poet is a poet by virtue of mimesis (1447b15, 1451b28, 1460a7–8[17]). Through mimesis, the poet makes stories plausible by adhering to what is likely or necessary. True events are always possible, and what is possible is generally (but not always) plausible, and so truth can serve the goal of mimesis (1451b15–16). Moreover, Aristotle must suppose that mimesis tracks truth fairly closely, because he points out at the start that a principal attraction of mimesis is that people recognize what mimetic pictures and diagrams represent (1448b16). Sometimes, however, a mimetic poet does better to represent events that are impossible. "For the purpose of poetry, one should select an event that is plausible but impossible in preference to one that is implausible but possible" (1461b11–12, 1460a26). Indeed, scenes that make no sense can be presented to a believing audience, especially in epic, and such scenes – which Aristotle calls *aloga*, usually translated "irrational" – are especially useful in serving the aims of poetry. Scenes that make no sense engender a sense of wonder, which is one of the goals of both epic and tragic poetry, though epic does it better. "Homer has taught others to tell falsehoods as they should be told" (1460a18–19). A purported action that really makes no sense cannot have occurred, but reporting it may, for all that, carry the emotional punch that is among the main aims of mimetic poetry. Of course, it is often true that people say things that make no sense (1461b13–15), and a poet can present such sayings without deviating from the truth. In any event, Aristotle says, poets should not present scenes that make no sense if an alternative is available.

Mimesis and learning. Chapter 4 of the *Poetics* gives us two closely related explanations in human nature for the development of poetry (1448b4–9). The first is that humans are the most given to mimesis of any animal and start their learning through mimesis; probably he refers to the way small children learn by imitating their elders.

The second is that all humans take delight in mimesis. Such delight, in turn, is explained first as part of the pleasure that everyone takes in learning (again, probably by imitating others), and then as the delight that one takes in recognizing a product of mimesis to be a representation of something that one has seen before. If one has not seen the original of a product of mimesis, then one cannot take pleasure in recognizing it as a product of mimesis, but only as a well-made object (1448b17–19).

A critic must ask, "If one has seen the original, what more could one learn by way of mimesis?" Janko suggests in his commentary that Aristotle used pictures and diagrams in his lectures on biology, and this is plausible in view of the examples of repulsive animals and corpses: what is unpleasant on the

dissecting table may be pleasant in a picture (1448b12, Janko 1987, 74). If the picture reminds us of the real thing, which we already know, then it can serve as an aid to learning.

Aristotle does not say (and the theory just stated does not imply) that all cases of mimesis qua mimesis cause pleasure. If he had said this, then he would be committed to the view that mimesis in tragedy gives pleasure qua mimesis because it is an aid to learning. A number of scholars have attributed such an intellectualist position on tragedy to Aristotle (Destrée and Herrmann 2012, 95 n.2). Indeed, part of the pleasure we take in tragedy may well arise from the recognition that human affairs are often as tragic plays represent them. But Aristotle nowhere makes such a point. If mimesis as such were the cause of tragic pleasure, than it would not matter whether or not the plot was structured so as to call upon pity and fear in the audience. But arousing such emotions is the goal of tragic poetry, according to Aristotle. Recognizing what is going on in a tragic play is surely necessary to feeling the tragic emotions, but that recognition is not the source of the pleasure that is distinctively tragic (Destrée and Herrmann 2012, 103). So although mimesis gives pleasure by helping us learn through pictures and diagrams, Aristotle's theory does not subordinate tragedy to the goal of learning.

Mimesis and representation. Mimesis does not match what we mean by representation. Mimesis can be used for the production of images, as we have seen, and images are representative. Also, when mimesis is impersonation it represents the person impersonated. But, as we have seen, imaging and impersonating are only two members of a larger family of mimesis concepts. Literary mimesis primarily consists in fashioning a story in such a way that it is likely to have happened, and therefore is plausible enough to engage emotions roughly in the same way that real-life events engage emotions. A poet with a historical theme may tell a story that represents actual events, but in doing so the poet is not mimetic (and therefore not really a poet at all). To be mimetic, the poet must make the story likely, but taking a true story and fashioning it so that it is more likely – the job of the mimetic poet – does not make the result any more representative. A likely story does not represent a true story; you do not need to know anything of what truly happened in order to make a story believable. That, after all, was part of Plato's criticism of the tragic poets in *Republic* Book 10. (You do need to know your audience, however, so that you can contrive to make your story believable by them.) A likely story that is pure fiction may be called representative in referring to an imagined original (as I have suggested above), but strictly speaking the merely likely story is not representative because it has nothing to represent.

Mimesis and the Fine Arts

The ancients did not hold to a systematic view of fine arts as related to one

another and free of strictly utilitarian purpose. Plato and Aristotle both come close to a systematic view of the arts, as they consider music, poetry, and dance as mimetic, along with the visual arts. Unifying the arts under the genus of mimesis carries a cost, as we can see from the perspective of our time.

If art is essentially mimetic, and if mimesis is good only insofar as it tracks the truth, then art is good only when it comes close to the truth, as it cannot do if it aims at pleasing an audience. This is a severe limitation on the arts, especially from the perspective of moderns who value originality along with purely aesthetic pleasures. Modernity in the arts, however, comes at the cost of a certain frivolity. Plato allows mimesis to bring human beings as close as possible to the divine.

Aristotle drives mimesis like a thin wedge between the arts and the truth. He believes we take a special pleasure in mimesis, both in doing it and in experiencing it, independent of its truth, and, in fiction, independent of its representational content. We might ask whether mimetic pleasure is an ancestor of aesthetic pleasure as understood in modern times. It is a remote ancestor at best. Aristotelian mimesis is purpose driven in all the cases he discusses, and this sets it apart from the production of art for purely aesthetic contemplation.

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FURTHER READING

Keuls (1978) is essential reading on mimesis and the visual arts in antiquity. For the study of mimesis in Plato one would do well to start with Verdenius (1949) and proceed to read *Republic X* with Halliwell's commentary (1988). Recent valuable essays on mimesis in Plato are published in Destrée and Herrmann's edited volume *Plato and the Poets* (2011). Collobert's thesis (2011) is that Plato rejects mimesis because mimesis cannot reach beyond appearances, a fairly widespread view that I have argued against above. In an important chapter, Lear (2011) rightly argues that Plato has not changed his account of mimesis between Books 3 and 10 of the *Republic* and focuses on how playing parts can affect character.

On Aristotle, readers should consult the following commentaries on the *Poetics* with their introductions: Else (1957), Lucas (1968), Janko (1987), and Halliwell (1987). In addition, all the chapters in Rorty (1992) are important reading.

Halliwell (2002) represents magisterial scholarship on mimesis in ancient philosophy.

For mimesis in modern aesthetic theory, read Walton (1990), and, for a different view, Woodruff (2008).

NOTES

1 In my article on mimesis in Aristotle, I considered only shared effects (1992, 91): "*M is a mimēma of O just in case M has an effect that is proper to O*." This, I now see, is too limiting.

2 Nehamas has made this point powerfully in his 1982 article.

3 Playing the part of Peisistratus, with his personal tics and mannerisms, is mimetic of him in particular, but it is not doing what tyrants properly do.

4 At Aeschylus *Libation Bearers* 563–564, the young men propose to escape notice as foreigners by changing their speech. Scholars disagree about the nature of the proposal, whether it is actually to speak the Phocian dialect (Nehamas 1982, 57) or to pretend to be doing so (Marusic 2011 , 222). Here appearance is a matter of life or death, but Nehamas is probably right

in view of Euripides' usage of the word elsewhere: the young men will appear to be Phocian because they will actually speak Phocian. It is, after all, a dialect they both know.

5 See Lear (2011, 215), to whom I owe this excellent point.

6 On tragic pleasure, see Destrée and Herrmann (2013) and Halliwell (2002, ch. 6, 166–206).

7 Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451b29–32. Plato elsewhere takes what is presented as *eikós* to be a likeness of the truth, and therefore in one sense mimetic (*Phaedrus* 273d2–6).

8 On this, I am following Nehamas (1982, 58).

9 "Destroy" 605b4; "cripple" 605c7.

10 For the debate as to whether Aristotle is responding to Plato in the *Poetics*, see Somville (1975, 48ff.) and Janko (1989).

11 See Woodruff (1992, 78–79).

12 Aristotle treats these spectator emotions as emotions in the full sense, and I have argued that that is correct (Woodruff 2013).

13 On tragic pleasure, see note 6 above; on the aims of tragedy according to Aristotle, see Woodruff (2009).

14 Especially 1340a14–b5, 1340a38 ff., and 1340a32 ff. Cf. *Problemata* 919b26 and 920a3. On the interpretation of this difficult chapter (and the history of interpretations) see Brüllmann (2013). My interpretation depends on the *Problemata* passages, but is on the whole in line with Brüllmann's.

15 The feelings music evokes are like emotions in many ways, but lack the intentionality or aboutness of emotions. Courage in the face of the Persian invaders may feel very like the feeling evoked by martial music, but the rhythm and tone of the music, which give us those feelings, do not represent the Persians. Aristotelian courage has to be situated – it consists of the right balance of emotions for the specific circumstances. This is a good example of how a mimetic product can carry only part of the effect of its original. For the point about emotions, see Woodruff (2008, 135–137, with 157).

16 Painting also may be mimetic of character (*Poetics* 6, 1450a27), but Aristotle gives no hint how this may be so. Probably he means that a character-painter can depict a person with the posture and appearance that a courageous person would be likely to have. Here, as in plot construction, the key is *eikós*.

17 “The poet himself should speak as little as possible, since this is not what makes him mimetic” (1460a7–8). This implies that the poet should be as mimetic as possible. In 1448a22 Aristotle presents one mode of mimesis as pure narrative: “the poet speaking himself and not changing” [into another, as Homer does]. The passages can be read as consistent (*pace* Halliwell 1995, 123 note a), if we understand that narrative is not in itself mimetic; narrative becomes mimetic when fashioned in such a way as to be lifelike and engaging. But “changing into another” – impersonating a figure in the story, as Homer does – is always mimetic.

CHAPTER 22
Fiction

Stephen Halliwell

Defining Fiction

Can poetry – can "imaginative literature" in general – tell its audiences truths about the world and their place in it? If so, what sorts of truths might these be: particular or universal? descriptive or normative? human or divine? If there is such a thing as poetic truth, is bad poetry therefore a form of falsehood, even "lying"? If, by contrast, truth cannot be expected of poetry, does that diminish the art's value or only create space for values of a different kind? Or is the truth–falsehood dichotomy insufficient to capture the significance of poetry and do we need a third category, "fiction," for this purpose? Can truth and fiction be mixed together, as the Muses appear to tell Hesiod at *Theogony* 27–28 when they announce – in a teasing tone that signals the symbolic force of their words – that they know both how to speak the truth and also how "to tell many falsehoods which resemble real things"?

Those questions are all in origin, and in a still important sense, Greek questions. They outline a cluster of issues which emerged within the various spheres of discourse (including poetic criticism, philosophy, and rhetorical theory) that contribute to the distinctive history of aesthetics in antiquity. They are questions, it is worth adding, which on occasion also found their equivalents in reactions to non-verbal art forms: notice, for example, Socrates' skepticism about particular episodes of Greek myth depicted in visual media (as well as in poetry) at Plato, *Euthyphro* 6b–c, or, somewhat differently, his reference at *Republic* 6.488a to composite creatures like goat-stags invented by painters. The present chapter, however, will confine itself very largely to poetry, with subordinate consideration of certain genres of prose literature. I shall concentrate on a selection of Greek texts which show more or less explicit awareness of the kinds of concerns registered above. But rather than simply surveying a series of passages which make pronouncements on poetic truth or falsehood, my argument will primarily address the more difficult question: is there a Greek concept of fiction?

Like many other problems of a similar kind in the history of ideas, this question calls for something more than a comparison of ancient and modern vocabulary, though there is no need to deny that there are particular terms, including the Greek verb *plattein*, "mould" or "fashion," and its cognates (equivalents to Latin *fingere*, *fictus* etc.), which are pertinent to the investigation.[1] But it is also a question which cannot be satisfactorily

answered by simply making up our minds what *we* (think we) mean by "fiction" and then looking for the existence or absence of a Greek counterpart to it. That is because we cannot take for granted a completely agreed modern concept of fiction. We need, instead, a more dialectical approach to the history of aesthetic ideas, one which constantly bears in mind the historical contingency of our own categories of thought. "[T]he boundaries between fiction and non-fiction … are not laid up in heaven" (Bakhtin 1981, 33).

Both the practice(s) and the conceptualization of "fiction" have evolved historically and are still evolving. The term itself, in English (other modern languages both match and magnify the complications), lacks a univocal semantics. I offer three brief illustrations of this point. First, lexical data alone cannot tell us what fiction is: the word's early use to denote mendacity or feigning remains available and can be activated or suppressed in individual contexts, a point interestingly parallel, as we shall see, to Greek usage of *pseudos* (lit. "falsehood") and its cognates. Second, at least until the eighteenth century "fiction" was readily applied to the status of (much) poetry, but this application became much less common as the term gradually hardened into the standard classification for certain kinds of prose literature. Far from creating a clear demarcation, that shift has left a serious obscurity about the boundaries of fiction, an obscurity which matters all the more when we expand our terms of reference to encompass pre-modern cultures. Third, the terminological development of "fiction" into a general category of prose narrative was itself hardly an uncontentious process. It was mediated through debates about the relationship of fiction to history and "life": witness, among other things, eighteenth-century arguments over the difference between the "romance" and the "novel" (the latter being, for some, more of a "true history" and less "fabulous" than the former), or nineteenth-century debates about the social and epistemological implications of expecting realism or naturalism from the novel.

Such disputes have not disappeared. They have not only continued to fuel the experimentalism of the novel itself but have also encouraged the burgeoning of hybrid categories – historical fiction, documentary fiction, "faction," autofiction – which tend further to destabilize the core criteria of fiction. Nor is it only novelists who exploit the elusiveness of fiction's identity. Some modern historians, resurrecting a freedom enjoyed by their ancient counterparts, have added to the fluidity of the concept by appropriating, but thereby also modifying the function of, what are normally regarded as fictional modes of writing (e.g. Hopkins 1999; Hatcher 2008).

Given those considerations, it should be no surprise that there has been such a proliferation of modern theories of fiction. These have been constructed within a plurality of intellectual frameworks: analytic philosophy, speech-act theory, "possible worlds" semantics, evolutionary psychology, cognitive poetics, narrative theory, and more besides.[2] Yet despite the diversity of

literary examples (sometimes) adduced by such theories, it is remarkable that all the schools of thought just mentioned arrive at predominantly *ahistorical* conclusions. They purport to identify the logical, semantic, or psychological components of fiction, and have little or nothing to say about the interaction between conceptual and cultural factors in the way that ideas relevant to the definition of fiction have developed over time.

These reflections are more than tangential to an interest in Greek (and Roman) sensibilities. They reinforce my contention that we do not have an entirely secure modern paradigm of fiction against which to test ancient texts and arguments. Rather than aiming to reduce fiction to a logically stipulative definition, we do better to think of it as an inherently complex zone of discourse, thought, and imagination which cuts across a strict dichotomy of truth and falsehood and intrinsically complicates both halves of that division. That is a perspective, I hope to show, which can help enhance our understanding of a range of Greek ideas, from Hesiod *Theogony* 27–28 (see above) onward. It should not be confused, however, with a crudely relativist view, let alone a view hospitable to facile notions of "panfictionality," that is, the thesis that *everything* is fiction – a proposition deeply objectionable on ethical as well as logical grounds (Ryan 2005).

Because my guiding question in this chapter is whether ancient debates about poetry, and to some extent "literature" more generally, display traces of conceptual, even theoretical, awareness of fictionality, I will have to leave largely on one side the workings of fiction as a set of practices in Greek poetry and literature. Relations between theory and practice in this area cannot, of course, be completely disentangled. In this connection it is worth glancing at the sheer multiplicity of claims which have been advanced about the emergence (even the "invention" or "birth") of fiction at specific junctures in Greek culture, since these claims are distributed across both literary and theoretical works. Different scholars have located the origins of Greek fiction(ality) in Homeric epic (especially the *Odyssey*), the words of the Muses to Hesiod in the prologue to the *Theogony*, the Archaic rise of literacy, Stesichorus' palinode on Helen, Pindar's *aperçus* on poetry, Gorgias's theory of language (and/or his theory of poetry), Plato's dialogues (candidates for *both* the practice *and* the partial theorization of fiction), Attic comedy (Old/Middle, according to some; New, according to others), Aristotle's *Poetics*, Theocritean bucolic, and, last but not least, the Greek novel (Halliwell 2011, 10–12 cites examples of all these views).

My own position will avoid on principle any suggestion of a single, determinate origin for Greek awareness of fictionality. But as a backdrop to my selective comments in the following sections it may be helpful to indicate that I see manifestations of Greek sensitivity to fiction as falling into several broad stages: first, the complex poetic self-consciousness of the Archaic period, a self-consciousness often in dialectic with claims to poetic truth-

telling and emblematized by the riddling words of the Muses at *Theogony* 27–28; second, a phase of more explicit theorization in a group of Classical thinkers which includes Gorgias, Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates; third, formalized Hellenistic and imperial typologies of discourse which have intricate implications for conceptualizing fiction; fourth (though I shall not be able to examine this in its own right here), a process of overlap, from the late Hellenistic period onward, between Greek and Latin categorizations, a process which involves the vocabulary of *fingere*, *fictus* etc. from which English and some other modern languages subsequently derive their own terminology of fiction.[3]

Classical Perspectives: Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle

My approach to the subject can be clarified in part by contrasting it with a recent work which defines fiction for expressly Greek purposes as consisting of "previously untold stories set in post-Homeric times, as distinct from history and myth" (Lowe 2000a , 265). Relying on his tripartite scheme of history, myth, and fiction, Lowe discovers the emergence of a Greek sense of fictionality principally in Old and Middle Comedy (Lowe 2000b; cf. Lowe 2000a, 88).[4] This is a thought-provoking thesis but is open to two main objections. First, the definition places unwarranted weight on newness or originality ("previously untold"), a factor which certainly has its own importance but should not be allowed, for reasons which will become apparent, to circumscribe what can count (in Greek terms) as fiction.[5] Lowe has been interestingly influenced in this regard by Greek comedy's self-references to its capacity for novelty. Antiphanes fr. 189, whose speaker contrasts comedy's constant creation of new characters and plots with tragedy's traditional scenarios, is germane here; and one can easily think of Aristophanic passages (including the slave's assertion at *Wasps* 71–73 that no spectator could conceivably guess what the father's outlandish affliction is – or, therefore, what the plot of the play will be) which emphasize authorial ingenuity at various levels of poetic creation.[6] But it is a crucial difference between Lowe and myself that while he thinks this constitutes evidence for the "invention" or first explicit awareness of fiction, I prefer to see it as highlighting one particular part of the spectrum of Greek fiction – and carrying it, indeed, to the point of metafiction.[7]

A second objection to Lowe stems from the fact that when he refers to "previously untold stories" he is using the term "story" itself, with a narratological inflection, to mean "the complete set of events recounted" as opposed to the narrative construction or the "telling" element in storytelling (Lowe 2000a, 267) – *histoire*, then, as opposed to *récit*. This raises a severe difficulty. In the body of his book, Lowe sometimes treats the second of those components of his narratological model as itself generating fiction: he talks, for example, of fifth-century tragedy, despite its use of (mostly) old "stories,"

as engaging in what he calls the "free fictional creation" of its *narratives* (Lowe 2000a, 189). So the definition ("previously untold stories …") effectively collapses: a new "telling" of an old "story" can in itself bring fiction into play. For my purposes, the vital lesson of this point is that fictionality can exist, or be perceived, *at more than one level* of a work (or genre). Fiction is not an all-or-nothing category.

That inference is worth developing in relation to a Greek philosophical text in which many scholars and critics have (rightly, in my view) found the adumbration of a concept of fiction. In Chapter 9 of the *Poetics*, Aristotle argues that even if a dramatist uses historical events as the basis of a tragedy, he must still reconfigure them into a poetically unified plot structure (*muthos*). Aristotle here gives striking prominence to the verb *poiein* ("make," "compose poetry") and the noun *poiētēs* ("maker," "poet"). At one point in the passage (*Poet*. 9.1451b20–22) the verb clearly denotes "invented" or "made up" events and characters. But the verb cannot mean "invent" when Aristotle speaks of a poet choosing (literally) "to make things that have happened" (1451b29–30), since he cannot be talking of "inventing" historical events. The process of *poiēsis*, here very closely linked to mimesis (1451b28–29), is a matter of plot construction: the elaboration, that is, of an imagined sequence of human action in a medium which requires its own formal design and unity. It might seem tempting, in the light of what was said earlier about Lowe's definition of fiction, to take Aristotle to be himself locating fiction in the "telling" rather than the "story" element of narrative. But that would not be quite right: Aristotle's conception of *muthos* in the *Poetics* is itself a combination of "story" and "telling." But it is legitimate to find here and elsewhere in the *Poetics* a recognition of *poiēsis*, and mimesis in general, as a fictive act: the representation of possible patterns of human experience in the form (whatever the source of the imagined events) of a distinct poetic artifact.

In any analysis of putative Greek conceptions of fiction much hangs on the relationship between the categories of myth and history. (Recall Lowe's attempt to make "fiction" distinct from them both.) But as the passage of the *Poetics* just cited shows, we ought not to expect to be able to anatomize Greek ideas of fiction with clean breaks at the joints. The mentality of Isocrates provides an illuminating test case in this respect. It is sometimes said that Isocrates does not distinguish between myth and history (e.g. Usher 1990, 156). That is incorrect. Isocrates defends the core historicity of an archive of traditional stories which includes the Trojan War, the life of Heracles, and the episode of the Seven against Thebes, but he regards the transmission of this archive over a long period of time as having diluted truth with invention. In the *Evagoras*, for instance, perhaps betraying the influence of Thucydides (1.10.3, 21.1), he contrasts the "truth" of the Trojan War with the "myths" which have been embroidered around it (9.66). He hints that not all characters in various versions of the war may even have existed (9.6), and he makes it

clear more generally that poets are culturally licensed to invent, embellish, and imaginatively elaborate the narrative materials of their works, introducing into them such things as face-to-face encounters between gods and humans which lie outside the permitted scope of a political prose writer like himself (9.9–10, 36). Isocrates was hardly alone in this set of attitudes: compare the general comment on tragedy at pseudo-Andocides 4.23 (probably a fourth-century BC text): "when you watch plays, you do not know whether those events actually happened like this or have been fashioned [the verb *plattein*] by the poets."

Isocrates sees myths, then, particularly in their poeticized retellings, as a category of discourse whose truth-value is variable. But since he shows no signs of supposing that poets have set out by their innovations and elaborations to *falsify* anything, or to mislead anyone, we are entitled to infer that he recognizes a fictionalizing force at work inside these narrative traditions. One instructive case of this Isocratean stance appears in his comments in the *Panegyricus* on the story of Demeter's visit to Attica and the consequent invention of agriculture. To buttress his ideological case for Athens' standing as the chief benefactor of the Greek, if not the entire, world, Isocrates wants to be able to invoke the privileged status accorded to Athens in the Demeter story. Yet he is wary of appearing to accept that story wholesale, with uncritical naivety. Isocrates was operating in a cultural climate where some, perhaps many, were radically skeptical about the historical authenticity of such myths; there are those, he says (4.30), who would despise these stories as "primitive" (*archaios*). Notice, accordingly, how his position in *Panegyricus* reveals a subtle nuance when he says that "even if the account [of Demeter's visit] has become mythologized (*muthōdēs*), it is still appropriate for it to be told in this context …" (Isoc. 4.28; compare the similar passage at Lycurgus, *Leocrates* 95). The perfect tense "has become" implies that the story in question is neither sheer fabrication nor wholly historical. It possesses a veridical kernel (I will not pause to ask how Isocrates knows that) but has, over time, become fictionalized – transformed into a dramatically self-propelling narrative – in many of its details. This position straddles the narratological story/narrative distinction I mentioned earlier. It is not straightforwardly that for Isocrates the "story" is historical but has been retold in fictional form. His views blur any such distinction, leaving it hard to say exactly where truth (and/or fiction) begins and ends. This is because, as a pragmatic rather than a painstaking intellectual, Isocrates is less concerned with extracting reliable "information" about the past from a body of traditional narratives, in the way that Thucydides had been, than in preserving the exemplary value of particular stories for his own ideological purposes.

The case of Isocrates supports my general thesis that fiction is best thought of not as a sharp-edged category but as a fluid zone of possibilities which

complicates a neat dichotomy of truth and falsehood.[8] Some of the ramifications of that point become visible in a more challenging form in the dialogues of Plato, who, as I stressed earlier, is a pivotal figure for the present inquiry. On the one hand, Plato is a candidate for being himself a major practitioner of fiction. Certainly, from a modern vantage point he has often been seen in that light; Nietzsche, Bakhtin, and D.H. Lawrence are among those who have regarded him as the first novelist.[9] But parts of his work are also important for posing questions about the truth-values of narrative, poetic, and other kinds of discourse in ways that direct attention to the conceptual problem of fiction. These two aspects of Plato's writing sometimes overlap at the point where philosophical myths are incorporated into the dialogues and prompt internal comments on those myths' own truth status as well as their relationship to other kinds of myths.[10]

The complexities surrounding Plato's double relationship to fiction are immense. They are such that it has proved possible for one leading scholar to shift from arguing that it was in Plato's work that the Greek "birth" of fiction originally occurred to maintaining, on the contrary, that Plato did not possess (and nor did Greek culture more generally) a proper concept of fiction after all (Gill 1979, 1993). I am not myself persuaded by *either* of these (interesting) claims. Not all the strands of the question can be unpicked here. In keeping with my own line of argument, I shall concentrate on reasons for disagreeing with Gill's denial of a concept of fiction to Plato.

Gill places great weight on the fact that Plato's texts prioritize the ethical acceptability of poetic (and other) narratives over their literal veracity: it matters far more, that is to say, whether a story endorses certain values than whether it recounts things which are, or ever were, actually the case. But in the discussion of poetry in *Republic* Books 2–3, according to Gill, Socrates goes further than that by equating "true" with "good," "false" with "bad," and thereby shows no interest in, or need for, anything like a category of fiction. Now I agree that in this and other Platonic passages a normative conception of truth is prioritized over factual veracity, though the latter is not actually collapsed into the former (hence the possibility of a true narrative which is *nonetheless* ethically unacceptable, 378a). It does not follow, however, that there is no scope here for awareness of fiction. On the contrary, I believe that this part of *Republic* 2–3 recognizes fictionality as a culturally sanctioned exemption from a requirement of literal truth-telling while refusing to allow that exemption as a defense against ethical criticism of poetry's contents. Even if a narrative is built around something other than historical or factual truth, it remains possible (and, Socrates suggests, essential) to scrutinize its acceptability at the level of ethical expressiveness and normativity.

Clear evidence in favor of this alternative reading occurs right at the start of the critique of poetic *muthoi* in Book 2, a passage strangely ignored by Gill. At the outset of Socrates' discussion of how the guardians of the ideal city

should be educated in *mousikē*, he sets up a basic division of *logoi* (which in principle covers all forms of discourse) into "truth" and "falsehood" (*pseudos*, 2.376e), the latter also equated with "fashioned stories" (the verb *plattein*, 377b6). This division has to be treated as in itself *pre*-ethical. In many Greek contexts, for sure, *pseudos* and its cognates denote mendacity (as can "fiction" in English usage). However, the term cannot have that sense in Socrates' basic dichotomy of discourse, not only because he talks of educating the young in (i.e. with) "false" as well as true *logoi* (377a), but also because he goes on to distinguish explicitly between good and bad "falsehood." Thus, although Hesiod, Homer, and other poets "compose" or "construct" stories/myths that are generically "false" (377d), only *some* of their falsehoods fail the test of the argument's ethical criteria.[11]

Socrates therefore acknowledges the existence of a kind of "false" discourse which, unlike mendacity, does not, per se, seek to mislead and can serve a positive function within its cultural setting. The point is underlined in a later reference back to Book 2's argument, when Glaucon stresses how they had earlier agreed that ethical habituation could be promoted by stories (*logoi*), "both the mythical [*muthōdeis*] and those more closely tied to actuality [*alēthinōteroi*]."[12] Furthermore, in an echo of the Hesiodic motif of poetic "falsehoods which resemble real things" (*Theogony* 28), Socrates speaks of the desirability in "mythology" of sometimes "making what is false [*pseudos*] resemble the true as far as possible" (382d), an unintelligible proposal unless *pseudos* here lacks negative implications of deceit. What emerges from this stretch of the work may not constitute a full-blown account of the workings of fiction. But it does show that Socrates' basic dichotomy between true and false discourse makes room for narrative whose significance and value are not tied to any presumption of literal truth. This in turn supplies a precedent for the *Republic*'s own so-called "noble lie" (or, better, "grand fiction"), which is itself envisaged as a piece of quasi-poetic "mythology" (3.414b–15c).

Where, then, Gill sees what one might call the ethical imperative within Platonic "narratology" (cf. Halliwell 2009) as excluding fiction, I see it as bringing to the surface a recognition of fictionality and, at the same time, of the need for an ethics of fiction. It is wrong to assume that a concept of fiction must be independent of questions of ethical normativity, that it must center on "a concern with story-telling for its own sake" or involve "authorial and narrative 'truth-games'" (Gill 1993, 62). Those are not (and should not be) criteria of fiction universally accepted by modern theorists, practitioners, or readers.

Juxtaposing Plato with Isocrates and Aristotle serves to foreground the way in which an awareness of fictionality can be motivated by different intellectual needs. Dominant in Isocrates' case, I have argued, is his culturally sensitive admission that the "archive" of Greek mythology, on which he draws for purposes of political and social ideology, is not a record of total historical

fidelity. That admission was itself induced by the pressure of a general cultural consciousness of the freedom enjoyed by poets in the construction and elaboration of their materials. In Aristotle's case, the impetus is precisely a desire to set up a model of artistic production in its own right. Several concepts in the *Poetics* accordingly bear traces of a sense of fictionality: this is true of mimesis (imaginative, "world-simulating" activity), *muthos* (the plot structure which the poet "makes" and configures), and, not least, the process of *poiein* or *poiēsis* (poetic composition) itself.[13] As for Plato, the central role is played by an uncompromising ethical imperative, an imperative, however, which carries with it an insistence that narratives which do not lay claim to literal truth are not thereby exempted from ethical demands. This reading of how a Platonic agenda allows space for recognition of fictive discourse has, moreover, a deep plausibility in terms of the dynamics of Plato's own writing, whose fictionalizing tendencies can be detected at several levels: in the concrete yet often historically "rewritten" circumstances which form the settings of individual dialogues; in imaginary scenarios, such as the *Republic*'s ideal city (itself conceived of as a *muthos*),[14] which contribute to the framing of hypothetical arguments; and, last but not least, in the grand metaphysical and eschatological visions of Plato's philosophical myths.

While the three thinkers considered above approach problems of fictionality from various directions, there is one important premise they share. It is a premise common, in fact, to ancient traditions of aesthetics in general and one which marks a crucial difference from many modern theories of fiction. Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle all accept without question that (poetic) "fictions," if successfully constructed and composed, have an intrinsic capacity to "transport the souls" (*psuchagōgein*) of hearers and readers in a way which involves genuine, not make-believe, emotions.[15] In relation to what is now often called the "paradox of fiction" (e.g. Gendler 2010, 227–237), these thinkers implicitly deny that there are any grounds to doubt the psychological authenticity of emotional engagement even with imaginary characters and events. What matters, for this characteristically Greek conviction, is not whether the objects of emotions are believed to be real but whether the manner in which those objects are evoked causes a sufficient degree of absorption on the part of an audience to activate the free flow of an affective response. Such a position had been defined in the fifth century by Gorgias, who we know held a metaphorical (and paradoxical) conception of aesthetic "deception" (*apatē*) which attempts to capture a notion of willing submission (Plato would call it "surrender": *Republic* 10.605d) to the imaginative power of a fictional world.[16] Gorgias took such power to be rooted in the seductive nature of *logos*, which for him is language in all its manifold uses. Fiction, on such a view, is a particular kind of *logos* which projects events known not to be literally true but nonetheless taps into the mind's instinctively emotional reactions to what is put before it with compelling vividness.

Postclassical Developments

The classical evidence examined in the previous section is conscious of fiction as a zone of possibilities which encroaches especially on the territory of "myth" and poetry, not least myth *in* poetry. In the Hellenistic period and beyond, awareness of fictionality continues to be often connected to reflections on these same topics. When, for instance, the scholar Eratosthenes, whose views are reported by Strabo, *Geography* 1.2.3, provocatively called Homeric poetry "an old woman's storytelling [*muthologia*]" which was free to fashion or fabricate (*plattein*) whatever would serve the entrancement (*psuchagōgia*) of its audiences, he was blocking various claims about the supposedly historical basis of Homer's poems by giving fiction priority over truth in epic, even though he also allowed for (for example) elements of accurate geographical reference within the poems (Pfeiffer 1968 , 165–168). Strabo, committed to a Stoic form of moralism, responded by conceding the presence of *muthos* (extravagantly inventive narrative) in Homer, while subordinating that concession to a cognitive and ethical framework of criticism which maintained Homer's status as a quasi-philosophical teacher (*Geography* 1.2.4–40).

But the Hellenistic period also saw issues of fiction raised in relation to a wider range of texts, including historiography and rhetoric. One important manifestation of this development is the emergence of typologies of the varying truth-values of different kinds of (in the broadest sense) narrative discourse. Although we cannot reliably chart the early formation of such typologies, they involved ideas which impinged on the fields of poetics, rhetoric, grammar, and historiography. They are attested in a number of sources, Roman as well as Greek,[17] from at least the first century BC onwards. And they persist until late antiquity, when for instance the rhetorician Nicolaus of Myra, in the fifth century, summarizes a four-part classification of narratives into mythical (*muthikos*), historical, pragmatic/judicial (i.e. the stuff of forensic and political decisions), and fictive (*plasmatikos*) – only superficially a neat arrangement, since he has to grapple, less than conclusively, with residual uncertainties: disagreement exists, he admits, about the possible historicity of some "mythical" stories, while *plasmatikos* is a term applicable both to such things as animal fables (themselves known as *muthoi*) *and* to narratives of events which in principle could have occurred.[18]

Some of the problems broached but far from fully resolved by such typologies can be sampled in the much-discussed schema of narrative (in both verse and prose) attributed by Sextus Empiricus to the grammarian Asclepiades of Myrlea.[19] Asclepiades divided the subject matter (*historia*) of all narrative into the true, the false, and the "as if true"; he glossed the true as "concerned with actual events" (*praktikē*), equated the false with "myths," and took comedy and mime to exemplify the "as if true." As reported, he further

subdivided the true into "three parts," dealing with, first, gods, heroes, and famous men, second, "places and times," and, third, actions; but this may be a garbled version of a set of distinctions – between agents, places, times, and events – applicable to *all* narratives (Slater 1972, 319–326). Asclepiades' schema is frustratingly incomplete. It does not tell us, for instance, whether the different types of subject matter can be combined within the same work or genre, though we do know of other Hellenistic theories which encompassed narrative hybridization, among them Polybius' tripartition of the components (historical reality, dramatic organization, myth) which constitute "poetic freedom" in Homer and others.[20] It is arguable that Asclepiades' typology represents less a set of fixed types than a spectrum of gradations of realism and fantasy. A notion of fictionality enters the picture, at any rate, with two of his three categories (and regardless of which of these Asclepiades classed as *plasma*, "fabrication"):[21] the "false," which probably covers those parts of mythology most blatantly incompatible with the observable workings of nature, but also the "as if true," associated particularly with quotidian verisimilitude of the sort depicted in New Comedy.

In a sense, Asclepiades' typology might be thought hardly new at all. It looks, on one level, like a formalization of the claim of Hesiod's Muses (see above), a claim which continued to be echoed by poets themselves in the Hellenistic period (Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus* 65, "may I myself tell falsehoods that would convince a hearer," being an ironic case in point). It is also likely to have taken some of its impetus from traditions of Peripatetic criticism which went back to Aristotle himself. In Chapter 9 of the *Poetics*, which proposes, as we saw earlier, that even historical events must be refashioned and re-formed in order to be made into effective poetry, Aristotle not only distinguishes between history (as the domain of things which have actually happened) and poetry (which deals with things "which *could* happen" according to probability or necessity); he also differentiates between (contemporary) comedy (whose plots and characters he takes to be entirely invented), iambos (which he thinks deals with real individuals), and tragedy (most of whose characters he assumes to have a basic historicity, though this cannot extend in his mind to all the details of the stories told about them). Later in the treatise, at *Poetics* 25.1460b8–11, Aristotle sets out a different and explicitly tripartite typology of the possible objects of mimesis (in both poetic and visual art forms): namely, "the sorts of things which did or do exist," "the sorts of things people say and believe," and "the sorts of things which ought to be the case." Chapter 25 goes on to make it clear that these types of subject matter cannot be neatly compartmentalized in terms of genre; epic and tragedy make use of all three of them. Aristotle's tripartition, especially when overlaid on Chapter 9's distinctions, does not yield a simple test of poetic truth and falsehood. It provides for mimetic art forms which can subtly manipulate fictionalized particulars (including reworked elements of history) and move between different narrative "registers," while nonetheless modeling their images of life

in keeping with the underlying structures of thought ("universals") which allow the mind to make connected sense of the world.

The sorts of distinctions drawn by Aristotle in *Poetics* 25 imply that sophisticated audiences/readers of poetry will adjust their expectations to suit different kinds of narrative content. Fictionality requires shared parameters of communication between text and recipient. Another (originally) Hellenistic typology which directs attention to this point is found in a scholion on the *Iliad*. It is attached to part of the scene in Book 14 where Hera distracts Zeus from events on the battlefield by inducing him to make love on the slopes of mount Ida (inside a golden cloud conjured up by Zeus). Stemming from a source which rejects Socrates' complaints in the *Republic* (3.390b–c) about the immorality of the gods' uncontrolled erotic desires, the scholion states that "there are three types according to which all poetry can be classified: that which is mimetic of truth …, that which involves imaginative embellishment [*phantasia*] of truth and should not be scrutinised in detail …, and, third, that which operates by transcending truth as well as by *phantasia* …"[22]

It is clearer here than in the case of Asclepiades' tripartition that we are dealing with a sliding scale. What's more, in the present case "truth" need not entail historicity; it is a reference point for what real life is taken to be *like*, as shown by the fact that even the first type is illustrated (if the text is not garbled) by a series of adjectives – "father-loving, woman-hating, unreliable, outspoken" – which appear to denote character traits that might be encountered in the everyday world, if also in such literary genres as New Comedy. As we move along the scale, then, we get increasingly remote from the domain of experience that poetry's own audiences have access to; at the furthest extreme we reach worlds ("Cyclopes, Laistrygonians, and the present scene of the gods") which by definition those audiences could never enter. The scholion's further comment on the middle type, whose imaginative embellishment or enhancement of truth "should not be scrutinised in detail" (a consideration evidently applicable, a fortiori, to the third type too), is revealing. It demonstrates that the impulse behind the whole scholion marks an attempt to correlate narrative modes/styles with appropriate frames of mind on the part of audience or reader. That point is clinched with a reference to the nature of souls in the Homeric Hades. These souls are notionally disembodied yet are represented as capable of taste and speech. But it is only a naive reader, so the scholiast indicates, who will literal-mindedly suppose that "they have tongues and throats."

The Homeric scholia, reflecting a synthesis of several traditions of literary criticism, show sensitivity to fiction in a range of poetic contexts (Nünlist 2009, 179–181, 260). The particular note I have cited, whatever its origins, exhibits an attitude which recognizes that poetry exercises a broad but fluctuating freedom of invention and imagination in switching between different kinds of "world" as defined in relation to an audience's normal

expectations of life. Fiction, on this view, is not a single phenomenon. It is more like a mobile perspective on reality, and one which calls for corresponding shifts in an audience's standards of judgment, including a willingness, where necessary, to adopt a sort of "suspension of disbelief" (cf. that phrase "should not be scrutinised in detail").

The nexus between fictionality and audience psychology can be seen from a different angle in Chapter 15 of Longinus, *On the Sublime*, where the author draws a distinction between the kinds of imagination/visualization (*phantasia*) respectively appropriate to poetry and rhetoric. Longinus sums up the difference by saying that poetic *phantasia* "belongs to the realm of mythic [*muthikōteros*] exaggeration and utterly exceeds credibility," whereas the best rhetorical *phantasia* is tied to what is "realistic and truthful" (*Subl*. 15.8). Rhetorical *phantasia*, Longinus believes, should aim at *enargeia*, vivid immediacy; it is tied to the goal of persuasion. Poetic *phantasia*, on the other hand, is ideally productive of *ekplēxis*, which is a trait of the sublime and has a license to reach beyond what is merely persuasive.

It is striking, however, that having established this distinction Longinus then equivocates over it. He does this in part by trying to preserve for the greatest rhetoric (which, after all, is a prime source of his examples of sublimity) the capacity to cross the boundaries of persuasion and overpower the mind with irresistible force. What transpires from his treatment of *phantasia* is that all visualization, rhetorical as well as poetic, amounts in varying degrees to a kind of imaginative creativity. How far the exercise of *phantasia* can legitimately diverge from the sphere of normal human possibilities depends on the aims of the particular piece of writing: thus it makes sense for a poet but not an orator to visualize Phaethon's journey in the chariot of the Sun. Longinus' thought moves here along two axes of judgment, one of realistic credibility and one of psychological compulsion. He is aware that they can conflict but also that they can be aligned, as he indicates elsewhere in the case of both the *Iliad* (9.13) and Sappho (10.1–3). Longinus' priorities are not in doubt. The fact that his overriding concern is with transfigured mental states induced by the power of words brings into play a sense of fiction not as a separate logical or semantic category but as a quality of intense, world-projecting expressiveness in the processes of the imagination – a quality which remains ultimately if paradoxically compatible with what Longinus considers to be the essential "truth" or authenticity of feeling transmitted by the sublime (Halliwell 2011, 327–367).

As that last remark suggests, Longinus represents an extreme point on the spectrum of views I have been sampling in this chapter. But it is nonetheless a feature of the whole genealogy of ideas outlined by my argument that it displays an instability in the relationship between fictionality and truth, an instability ironically registered by Plutarch when he quotes the old, ambiguous Greek proverb "bards tell many falsehoods" and adds "in some

cases intentionally, in others unintentionally."[23] All the evidence I have examined here is concerned with the psychological, cultural, and ethical implications of poetic and other imaginative texts whose narrative "worlds" (and their network of connections to history, myth, and "life") cut across any simple dichotomy of truth and falsehood. Constructing a worthwhile dialogue between ancient and modern presuppositions in this area remains a major challenge. The question I have had in my sights throughout – "is there a Greek concept of fiction?" – may not admit of a definitive or uncontentious answer. But it is at any rate one useful means by which to engage with some of the most difficult problems raised by the literary aesthetics of antiquity.

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FURTHER READING

The most important publication on ancient ideas of fiction is the collection edited by Gill and Wiseman (1993): contributions – stimulatingly diverse in their assumptions – range across matters of literary theory and practice. Pratt (1993) detects elements of fictionality at various levels of Archaic Greek debates over truth and falsehood in poetry. Two substantial but very different approaches to the history of Greek awareness of fiction can be found in Finkelberg (1998) and Lowe (2000a, 2000b): Finkelberg sees "the poetics of fiction" emerging in the fifth century and being fully consolidated in Aristotle's *Poetics* (see Rutherford 2000 for possible objections); Lowe assigns comedy a decisive role in breaking away from both mythological and historical material. Discussions of Plato which find a consciousness of fictionality in his work include Smith (1985, 27–32) and Janaway (1995; see his index); on the other side are Ferrari (1989) and Gill (1993). Halliwell

(2002) pursues multiple connections between concepts of fiction (see the index) and theories of mimesis. Much of the evidence relevant to Hellenistic thinking on the subject, including the diffuse material of the scholia on various authors, is sifted by Meijering (1987, chs II–III); on the Homeric scholia see also Nünlist (2009). Using rather different premises from my own, Konstan (1998) constructs a lineage for Greek fictionality that runs from New Comedy to the novel. Laird (2007) weaves together reflections on ancient and modern ideas of fiction in relation to both literature and philosophy.

NOTES

1 The earliest relevant instance of the *plattein* word group is Xenophanes B1.22 DK, calling entities like titans, giants, and centaurs "fabrications [*plasmata*] by previous generations": the point is ambiguous between lying and narrative invention. Other instances are cited in the text and in the notes below.

2 Examples include Currie (1990), Lamarque and Olsen (1994), Doležel (1998), Cohn (1999), and Boyd (2009).

3 The earliest uses of *fingere* to denote literary/rhetorical fiction include Cicero, *De inventione* 1.27, [Cicero] *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.13, Horace, *Ars Poetica* 119, 151, 338. Cf. n. 17 below.

4 Lowe (2000b, 265) qualifies his genealogy of fiction by allowing for "proto-fiction" in, for example, the *Margites* and Archilochean iambos.

5 In strict logic Lowe's definition would make any "fictional" story *cease* to be fiction the moment it was retold.

6 Antiphanes fr. 189 *PCG* is not cited in Lowe (2000a), but see Lowe (2000b, 260–262).

7 Old/Aristophanic comedy is frequently metafictional (cf. Waugh 1984 for the concept) in blatantly drawing attention to its own fictional status, though critics have generally preferred the term "metatheatre." For subtle treatment of Aristophanic (meta)fictionality, see Ruffell (2011).

8 For related reasons, there is no such thing as "pure" or "absolute" fiction, *contra*, for example, Payne (2007, 3) (on the bucolic world of Theocritus).

9 Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy* §14, Bakhtin (1981, 22) (citing "Socratic dialogues" in general), Lawrence (1971, 193). In antiquity, Aristotle's classification of Socratic dialogues as mimesis (*Poetics* 1.1447b11) also implies fictionality.

10 Relevant passages include *Gorgias* 523a, 527a, *Phaedo* 110b, *Republic*

10.614b, *Timaeus* 26c–e; cf. Halliwell (2007, 252–254). Note the barbed judgment of the Epicurean Colotes that in the myth of Er, Plato "spends time using falsehood/fiction [*pseudos*] by mythologising like a poet" (Proclus, *In Platonis Rempublicam* 2.105.23–25).

11 See the phrasing *mēlou kalōs pseudesthai*, lit. "not to engage well in falsehoods," at 377d–e; likewise, the pejorative force of *katapseudesthai* (381d, 391d), "to slander by falsehood," leaves open the possibility of a *positive* use of "false" stories. Ford (2002, 231) glimpses this point but still essentially supports Gill's position. The verb *suntithenai*, compose/construct, 377d, is itself non-pejorative, as at Plato, *Phaedo* 60c and, for example, Aristotle, *Poetics* 13.1453a19, Isocrates 9.36.

12 *Republic* 7.522a: for the adj. *muthōdēs* (nowhere else in Plato) see Isocrates 4.28 with my text above; cf. Halliwell (2011, 291–294).

13 For one modern theorist's equation between mimesis and fiction, see Hamburger (1973, 10–14).

14 See *Republic* 2.376d, 6.501e for the imagining of Callipolis as a kind of *muthos*; cf. the allusion at Plato, *Timaeus* 26c, with *Laws* 8.841c for a parallel point.

15 For the vocabulary of *psuchagōgia*, spellbinding entrancement, see, for example, Isocrates 2.49, Aristotle, *Poetics* 6.1450a33, 1451b16, Timocles fr. 6 *PCG*, with Halliwell (2011, 223–227); Plato uses it of rhetoric (*Phaedrus* 261a, 271c–d), not poetry, though he does use comparable vocabulary of the latter.

16 See Gorgias B23 DK (tragedy as a successful and justified form of aesthetic "deception"), with his *Helen* (B11) 8–14 for a broader conception of *logos* as "molding" the mind in ways independent of truth.

17 Roman sources standardly cited in this connection include Cicero, *De inventione* 1.27, [Cicero] *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.12–13, Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 2.4.2; see Reinhardt and Winterbottom (2006, 78–80). On the respective vocabularies of Greek and Latin in this area, cf. Barwick (1928), Hose (1996).

18 Nicolaus, *Progymnasmata* 12.17–13.13; cf. Meijering (1987, 79–82).

19 Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 1.252–253; cf. 1.92, 1.263–264 for similar divisions, though the relationship between the three passages is debatable: discussion in, for example, Walbank (1985, 233–236), Meijering (1987, 75–87), Rispoli (1988, 21–27, 170–204), Nesselrath (1990, 151–161) (disputing that the schema derives from Theophrastus), Feeney (1991, 42–44), Blank (1998, 266–270).

20 Polybius, *Histories* 34.4.1–4, with the wider context at 34.2.1–4.8; note Polybius' denial that it is Homeric "to invent everything" (*panta plattein*, 34.4.4). Cf. Walbank (1979, 577–578, 584–585).

21 For different judgments on this textual issue, see Nesselrath (1990, 154 n.11), Blank (1998, 266–267).

22 Scholia bT on *Iliad* 14.342–351: for the omitted phrases, see the next paragraph in my text. Compare, with differences of detail, Schmidt (1976, 60–63), Meijering (1987, 67–72), Halliwell (2002, 305–307).

23 Plutarch, *Quomodo adulescens* 16a, with 16b–c etc. for a kind of conspectus of Greek vocabulary of fictionality, including *plattein* (fashion, fabricate), *pseudos* (falsehood/fiction), and various *muthos* terms: cf. Hunter and Russell (2011, 83–87), Halliwell (2002, 296–302).

CHAPTER 23
Imagination

Anne Sheppard

The English word "imagination" is the standard translation of the Greek *phantasia.*[1] In this chapter I shall be considering two contrasting ways in which the term *phantasia* is used in ancient aesthetics. I shall be talking first about *phantasia* as visualization and then about a different, much less common use of the term, to refer to the imaginative capacity to reach beyond our everyday experience.

Phantasia as Visualization

A well-known passage of the work *On Sublimity* attributed to Longinus, probably written in the first century AD, neatly encapsulates the first use of *phantasia*: "the word has also come into fashion for the situation in which enthusiasm and emotion make the speaker *see* what he is saying and bring it *visually* before his audience" (15.1). *Phantasia* here is connected explicitly with visualization by the writer and the recreation of such visualization in the audience. Both here and in the discussion of examples which follows the writer of *On Sublimity* is explicitly talking in terms of the seeing of images "in the mind's eye," a seeing which is brought about by "enthusiasm and emotion." This way of talking about visualization is very common in ancient literary criticism and is closely linked to the concept of *enargeia* ("vividness"). Although Aristotle does not use the term *phantasia* in the way it is used in *On Sublimity*, the connection between visualization and vividness is already present in his work and adumbrated in some earlier writers.

We may begin, as the Greeks themselves liked to do, with Homer. Already in the *Odyssey* Odysseus praises the bard Demodocus for telling about the Trojan War *as if he had been there*: "Very beautifully [*kata kosmon*] you sing the fate of the Achaeans, their deeds and sufferings and toils, as if you were there yourself or had heard from someone else" (*Odyssey* 8.489–491).

Gorgias, perhaps the most famous rhetorician of the fifth century BC, included in his *Defence of Helen* some reflections on the power of speech (*logos*), including poetry under that heading: "Those who hear poetry feel the shudders of fear, the tears of pity, the longings of grief. Through the words, the soul experiences its own reaction to successes and misfortunes in the affairs and persons of others" (§9).

Homer and Gorgias make no use of the terminology of *phantasia* and *enargeia* but the seeds of the later theory are already present in their

comments: Homer is concerned with the poet and his ability to tell a story as if he had been present himself; the idea that he makes his audience feel as if they in their turn had been present is at best implicit. Gorgias, the rhetorician, turns his attention to the audience and their emotions, as a reaction to "successes and misfortunes in the affairs and persons of others." In later writers, we shall find the emphasis sometimes on the author, sometimes on the audience, and the effect of successful visualization described sometimes more in terms of author and audience feeling *as if they had been there*, sometimes more in terms of their emotional reactions.

Homer and Gorgias offer no suggestions as to what techniques an author should employ in order to achieve such an effect but the idea that visualization could be deliberately induced is arguably implicit in the fun which Aristophanes pokes at Agathon in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Agathon appears dressed as a woman and explains his strange appearance to Euripides' puzzled kinsman in the following terms: "I change my clothing according as I change my mentality. A man who is a poet must adopt habits that match the plays he's committed to composing. For example, if one is writing plays about women, one's body must participate in their habits" (148–152). It could be argued that Aristophanes here is mocking the effeminate style of Agathon's poetry, rather than his subject matter, especially as Agathon has just sung a set of lyrics which presumably parody that style. Euripides' kinsman, however, takes it that subject matter is referred to and seizes the opportunity for some jokes about what Agathon will have to get up to if he needs to imitate Phaedra or a satyr. It would clearly be unwise to try to extract an elaborate theory from a comic scene which would be funny when performed even to an audience who knew little or nothing about Agathon and his work. But Aristophanes' contemporary audience *did* know about Agathon; they would have seen his plays and might have known that he was an admirer of Gorgias. The scene is based on the assumption that a poet should project himself imaginatively into his work – just the assumption which we find, in a more specific form, in later theories of *phantasia* as visualization. For Aristophanes to use this assumption in the way he does means that it must have been familiar at some level to at least some of his audience.

Plato too is familiar with the assumption and Plato too pokes fun at it. Characteristically, however, Platonic irony, while no less deadly in its effects than Aristophanic parody, is more subtle and has a more complex theoretical background. In Plato's *Ion*, Socrates suggests to Ion, a professional rhapsode, or reciter, of Homer, that he, like Demodocus in the *Odyssey*, imagines himself present at the events he describes:

> When you recite epic verses well and most amaze your audience – whether you are singing about Odysseus leaping on the threshold, making himself known to the suitors and pouring arrows out at his feet, or about Achilles rushing to attack Hector, or singing some sad passage about Andromache

> or Hecuba or Priam – are you then in your right mind? Or are you beside yourself and, under the influence of inspiration, do you imagine you are present at the events you are describing, whether in Ithaca or at Troy or wherever the story of the epic is actually set? (535b–c)

Ion's reply makes clear that, like the audience described by Gorgias, he enters into the story he is telling to such an extent that he experiences the emotions which would be felt by someone present at the scene: "When I recite a sad passage, my eyes fill with tears; when it is something frightening or terrifying, my hair stands on end with fear and my heart jumps" (535c). What is more, Ion transmits his emotions to the audience: "I look down at them from the stage and see them weeping and looking terrified and marvelling at what is being said" (535e).

However, there are some problems about this picture of the rhapsode who feels as if he were present at the scenes he acts out for his audience and so transmits the emotions on to them. First, the emotions he feels at the plight of Homer's fictional characters are to some extent artificial, for when he performs he is, as Socrates points out, "at sacrifices and festivals … standing among more than 20,000 friendly people" (535d). Furthermore, if Ion is to earn his living from his profession, he *has* to remain aware of the artificiality. As he himself admits, "if I make them weep, I shall be laughing myself as I take my money but if I make them laugh, I shall be weeping myself because I will lose money" (535e). There is a tension, not further explored in the dialogue, between the claim made by Socrates, that Ion's skill in reciting Homer is simply a matter of inspiration, not knowledge, and the suggestion that there is some deliberate artifice involved in Ion's imagining himself present at the scenes he describes and so influencing the emotions of his audience.

Earlier ideas about deliberate imaginative visualization by both poets and orators are picked up and developed by Aristotle, both in the *Poetics* and in the *Rhetoric*. Although Aristotle does not express these ideas in quite the same language as we find in Hellenistic and Roman writers, his presentation of them lays the foundation for the later theory. In the *Poetics* he draws attention to the importance of visualization by the dramatist when working out a plot:

> A poet should compose plots and work them out in language by putting things before his mind's eye [*pro ommatōn*] as much as possible. For in that way, by picturing them very vividly [*enargestata*], as if he were present at the actual events, he can find what is appropriate and is least likely to overlook incongruities. The criticism made of Carcinus is evidence for this. For Amphiaraus was coming back from the temple, which would have escaped notice if it had not been seen, but fell flat on the stage, because the audience did not like it. One should also, as far as

> possible, work plots out by using gestures. For, given the same natural ability, those who are actually experiencing emotions are the most convincing: someone who is distressed most authentically portrays distress, and someone angry most authentically portrays anger.
>
> (17.1455a22–32)

Aristotle here is recommending that the poet should indeed behave rather as Aristophanes mocks Agathon for doing, and rather as Socrates teases Ion for doing (although Ion is a reciter and interpreter, not a poet). He should imagine the events as if he were there and should feel the appropriate emotions in order to express them in his work. Little is said here about the audience; there is only an allusion to their annoyance at Carcinus' failure to foresee a problem with the presentation of events on the stage, in a play which is otherwise unknown. However, we can infer from this, first, that Aristotle is thinking of the dramatist as visualizing his play *in performance*, and second, that when such visualization is successful, the audience's reaction would be very different from their irritation with Carcinus.

Aristotle's talk of the poet "putting things before his mind's eye" sounds casual and colloquial but in fact the phrase " before his mind's eye" (*pro ommatōn*) functions, both here and elsewhere in Aristotle's work, almost as a technical term for visualization. It is used in this way in some passages of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* which are relevant to my topic. In particular, in *Rhetoric* 2.8 Aristotle discusses pity, and, with an eye to the techniques by which defendants in the law courts attempted to arouse pity for their situation, says:

> And since sufferings are pitiable when they appear near at hand and since people do not feel pity, or not in the same way, about things ten thousand years in the past or future, neither anticipating nor remembering them, necessarily those are more pitiable who contribute to the effect by gestures and cries and displays of feelings and generally in their acting; for they make the evil seem near by making it appear before [our] eyes [*pro ommatōn*] either as something about to happen or as something that has happened, and things are more pitiable when just having happened or going to happen in a short space of time.
>
> (1386a29–36)

Here it is the audience, or rather the jury, who visualize the sufferings of the defendants; the Greek phrase, *pro ommatōn*, leaves it open whose eyes are meant but the sense requires that it be the eyes of the jury and in English we have to specify that, as George Kennedy does in his translation by inserting "our." The jury are not quite made to feel as if they had been there, but the sufferings are made to appear "near at hand;" the arousal of their emotions is explicitly the object of the exercise.[2]

By the first century AD *phantasia* had become the standard term for

"visualization," used by critics of both literature and visual art. Talk of visualization, of putting things before the mind's eye, and of vividness can be found in a wide range of discussions of poetry, oratory, historiography, and painting. Quintilian, writing on the education of the orator, uses the term *phantasia* not of the ability to visualize but of the images called up by such an ability, declaring that the orator who is most effective in moving his audience will be the one who has a good stock of what the Greeks call *phantasiai* and the Romans call *visiones*, "by means of which images of absent things are presented to our mind in such a way that we seem to see them with our eyes and have them before us" (6.2.29). Similarly at 8.3.63–65 Quintilian praises Cicero for his skill in describing Verres in such a way that his listener, or reader, feels as though he is seeing the object of Cicero's prosecution himself. The Roman poet Ovid, who was well educated in rhetoric, describes himself in his exile at Tomis on the Black Sea as visualizing in imagination the home, city, and wife no longer physically present: "My house, the city and the appearance of the places wander before my mind's eye [*ante oculos*] … The image of my wife is before my mind's eye [*ante oculos*] as if she were present" (*Tristia* 3.4.55–60); "My mind sees everything clearly, using its own eyes [*oculis suis*]" (*Ex Ponto* 1.8.34).

Typically when a writer, or a painter, is praised for realistic imitation or representation (*mimēsis*), he is praised for the vividness of his work (*enargeia*) and his success both in visualizing what he is depicting and in recreating such visualization in his audience. The effects of such visualization are described primarily in terms of emotion. We can see in more detail how this cluster of ideas is used by a variety of authors if we turn to some further texts.

Aelian's *Historical Miscellany* is a collection of anecdotes and historical material, dating from the early third century AD. In 2.44 Aelian describes a painting by Theon and its use in what we would call a multi-media experience:

> Many works attest the fine technique of the painter Theon, and in particular the painting of a hoplite coming to the rescue when the enemy suddenly invade and bring death and destruction to the land. The young man clearly looks as if he is about to do battle with great spirit; you would say he was inspired, as if he were possessed by Ares. His eyes have a fiery look. Having snatched his weapons, it appears, he makes for the enemy as fast as his feet will carry him. Already he holds his shield in position on one side and brandishes a drawn sword, with a blood-thirsty look and ready to kill, and shows by his whole bearing that he will spare no one. Theon has added nothing else to the picture – no comrades, no commanding officer, no subaltern, no cavalry or archers; this one hoplite was enough to satisfy the demands of the picture. However, the artist did not reveal the picture, or show it to the public that had come to look at it, before he had summoned a

> trumpeter. He ordered the man to play the call to attack as loud and clear as possible, as if it were a summons to battle. The strident, terrifying notes rang out just as trumpets summon the infantry to immediate action, and at once the picture was revealed; the soldier could be seen, and the music made the impression of the man dashing into battle even more vivid.

This description of Theon's painting makes it clear that its vividness, or *enargeia*, consisted in the representation of the hoplite's feelings and attitude, as they might be inferred from the behavior depicted in the painting. Notice the two references to the look in his eyes and to his "showing by his whole bearing that he will spare no one." Also interesting is the story at the end of the passage about the artist summoning a trumpeter to play as the picture was revealed. It seems that music also has a part to play in achieving vividness, even though many of our sources talk as though this concept relates only to the sense of sight. We may ask what was the point of using the trumpeter. Was Theon engaged in *trompe l'oeil*, in trying to make the spectators believe they were actually seeing a real hoplite? Perhaps, but it seems much more likely that he wanted to make them feel *as if* they were there, while of course knowing perfectly well that they were looking at a painting.

Another, similar, but less detailed, description of a painting, this time by Euphranor, can be found in Plutarch, *On the Fame of the Athenians* 346e–347a:

> This was the action which Euphranor depicted, and in his portrayal of the battle one may see the clash of conflict and the stout resistance abounding in boldness and courage and spirit. But I do not think you would award judgement to the painter in comparison with the general, nor would you bear with those who prefer the picture to the trophy of victory, or the imitation to the actuality.
>
> Simonides, however, calls painting inarticulate poetry and poetry articulate painting: for the actions which painters portray as taking place at the moment literature narrates and records after they have taken place. Even though artists with color and design, and writers with words and phrases, represent the same subjects, they differ in the material and manner of their imitation; and yet the underlying end and aim of both is one and the same; the most effective historian is he who, by a vivid representation of emotions and characters, makes his narration like a painting. Assuredly Thucydides is always striving for this vividness in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator, as it were, and to produce vividly in the minds of those who peruse his narrative the emotions of amazement and consternation which were experienced by those who beheld them.

The battle shown in the painting was one in which the Athenians and the Spartans together defeated the celebrated fourth-century Theban general, Epaminondas. Plutarch's description does not explain just how Euphranor

depicted "the clash of conflict and the stout resistance abounding in boldness and courage and spirit," although a slightly earlier passage (346a–b) suggests that Euphranor liked military subjects and was admired for his success in painting martial-looking human figures. Plutarch was something of a Platonist and that is why his admiration for the realism of Euphranor's battle picture is somewhat grudging. Note his comment: "But I do not think you would award judgement to the painter in comparison with the general, nor would you bear with those who prefer the picture to the trophy of victory, or the imitation to the actuality."

In his *Life of Aratus* (32.3) Plutarch alludes to another painting of a battle, this time by Timanthes, which was particularly vivid in its composition. All these references to vivid, realistic paintings, including Aelian's description of the painting by Theon, are to paintings of military scenes. At least as far as Plutarch is concerned, the interest in paintings of battles goes together with an interest in descriptions of similar scenes in historiography. If we return to *On the Fame of the Athenians* 346e–347a, we can see that Plutarch moves from the comments on Euphranor's painting to some interesting remarks about Thucydides' skill in vivid representation. He does so by means of what was by his time something of a commonplace, the comparison between poetry and painting attributed to the Archaic Greek poet, Simonides. When Plutarch comes to talk about history here, he writes as though representation in painting is straightforward and unproblematic, whereas representation "with words and phrases" is less easy to explain: "the most effective historian is he who, by a vivid representation of emotions and characters, makes his narration like a painting;" Thucydides wants "to make the reader a spectator, as it were." Although the idea that representation is easier to understand in the visual arts than in literature might seem an obvious one, I suspect that Plato is again lurking in the background here. Other things are lurking too. Plutarch is thinking of the historian as something like a dramatist and something like an orator. The Greek word for "narration" in Plutarch's text – *diēgēsis* – is the word used for the narrative of events given by a forensic orator, writing a speech for the law courts. The word translated "characters" is *prosōpa*, a word which means not "characters" in the sense of "personalities" but in the sense of "characters in a play," "*dramatis personae*." So, according to Plutarch, an effective historian, like Thucydides, will use similar techniques to those used by the dramatist and the orator to make his narrative "like a painting" in its vividness. Despite the Platonist background, this vividness is clearly *not* just a matter of accurate copying of physical detail; the historian makes his narration like a painting "by a vivid representation of emotions and characters [i.e. *dramatis personae*]."

The examples from Thucydides which Plutarch goes on to give confirm that the portrayal of emotion, through the description of behavior, is what interests him. He first summarizes Thucydides 4.10–12, an account of quite a complex

battle, and then quotes some sentences from Thucydides' account of the ill-fated Sicilian expedition (7.71): "'because of the continued indecisiveness of the struggle they accompany it in an extremity of fear, with their very bodies swaying in sympathy with their opinion of the outcome.'" He comments: "Such a description is characterized by pictorial vividness both in its arrangement and in its power of description" (*On the Fame of the Athenians* 347b–c). Notice that Plutarch chooses a sentence from Thucydides which describes physical behavior (the swaying bodies) that is indicative of an emotion (the extremity of fear). He is quite right – this scene could be portrayed by an artist, and Thucydides' selection of this particular detail is remarkably vivid and effective.

I suggested earlier that the painter Theon, by having a trumpeter play the call to attack as his painting of a hoplite was unveiled, was trying not to deceive his audience with *trompe l'oeil* but to make them feel *as if* they were there. For Plutarch, Thucydides has a similar aim. Let us return once more to the final sentence of the description of Euphranor's battle painting: "… it is his desire to make the reader a spectator, as it were, and to produce vividly in the minds of those who peruse his narrative the emotions of amazement and consternation which were experienced by those who beheld them." Thucydides is trying not just to make his readers feel as if they were there but also to feel the emotions they would have felt if they had been. No wonder, then, that one of his examples is the sentence from Thucydides 7.71. That sentence describes the behavior, and emotions, of those who were watching the final battle in the harbor at Syracuse – no drama on a stage but a battle on which their lives depended. According to Plutarch, Thucydides' description turns his readers into spectators of these spectators within his narrative, enabling them in some sense to feel the emotions which those real-life spectators felt.

Another interesting text comes from a work attributed to Plutarch but not by him:

> If one were to say that Homer was a teacher of painting as well, this would be no exaggeration, for as one of the sages said, "Poetry is painting which speaks and painting is silent poetry." Who before, or who better than Homer, displayed for the mind's eye gods, men, places, and various deeds, or ornamented them with the euphony of verse? He sculpted in the medium of language all kinds of beasts and in particular the most powerful … He dared also to give the gods human shapes. Hephaestus, making the shield of Achilles and sculpting in gold the earth, the heavens, the sea, even the mass of the sun and the beauty of the moon, the swarm of stars that crowns the universe, cities of various sorts and fortunes, and moving, speaking creatures – what practitioner of arts of this sort can you find to excel him? Let us examine another of the many examples that show that he imitated things so well that we seem to see them rather than hear about them.

> Talking of Odysseus' scar he speaks of Eurycleia: [Here 'Plutarch' quotes *Odyssey* 19.467–477]
>
> Here, while everything that can be displayed to the eye is presented as if in a painting, there is still more – things that the eye cannot grasp, but only the mind – the surprise that makes her drop the foot, the noise of the bronze bowl, the water splashing out and the old woman's simultaneous joy and anguish, and the things said to Odysseus as well as those that she is on the verge of saying, as she looks towards Penelope. Many other things are described in the same graphic manner by the poet, as one can see simply from reading him.
>
> ('Plutarch', *On the Life and Poetry of Homer* 216–217)

The essay *On the Life and Poetry of Homer* probably dates from the second century AD and claims that Homer is the source of knowledge and skills of all kinds. So Homer has to be "a teacher of painting" as well, and able to excel the painters in their art. The author quotes Simonides again before going on to praise Homer's ability to depict all kinds of things "for the mind's eye" (or "for visualization in thought," *phantasia tōn noēmatōn*). Then he discusses a particular example of Homer's skill, the description in *Odyssey* 19 of Odysseus' old nurse, Eurycleia, washing his feet on his return to Ithaca and recognizing him by a scar on his foot. Interestingly, this is precisely the example of Homeric realism used by Erich Auerbach to start off his famous book on the development of literary realism, *Mimesis*. According to *On the Life and Poetry of Homer*, Homer surpasses the painters in being able to reveal things which the eye cannot grasp but only the mind: these are emotional reactions (surprise, joy, anguish) and sounds (the noise of the bronze bowl, the splashing, the things said to Odysseus). Yet in the end the author falls back on describing Homer as writing like a painter ("in the same graphic manner") and enabling his reader to *see* what he describes.

My final examples of texts which use the term *phantasia* in the sense of "visualization" and connect it with vividness, realistic representation, and effects on the emotions come from the fifth century AD. The Neoplatonists of late antiquity were well educated in literature and in rhetoric. Here is a passage from the commentary, or rather collection of essays, on Plato's *Republic*, written by Proclus. He is discussing Plato's qualities as a writer and his debt to Homer:

> Plato first of all follows meticulously the stylistic form of the Homeric *mimēsis*. The characters of all those who appear in the dialogues are developed and the qualities of their lives passed on to us with a vividness [*enargeia*] equal to that with which Homer described the heroes, and both writers present their characters virtually as if they were present and expressing their own opinions and alive before us … Indeed the

> representation [*mimēsis*] of these men moves our imagination [*phantasia*] in many ways and changes our opinions, adjusting them to the changing subject-matter, so that many are moved to cry with Apollodorus as he wails in distress, and many as well with Achilles as he laments for his friend, and at such a great distance in time they experience the same things as those who were then present. We seem to be actually present at the events on account of the vivid presentation [*enargē phantasian*] of the things imitated, generated in us by the representation [*mimēsis*]. (1.163.19–164.7)[3]

The word *phantasia* is used in two different senses in this passage. In the first sense, which I have translated "imagination," it refers to the faculty of imagination, which, for Proclus, comes below the intellectual faculties, and is therefore susceptible to being moved by vivid literary descriptions. The second sense, translated here as "presentation," might be understood simply as "appearance" or "impression," a common meaning of the word in philosophical contexts. However, given the widespread collocation of the terms *phantasia*, *enargeia*, and *mimēsis* in ancient literary criticism, it must refer specifically to the visualization which both Plato and Homer successfully produce in their readers.

Another writer who combines the philosophical and the literary critical senses of *phantasia* is the Christian Neoplatonist, Synesius of Cyrene, who in his work *On Dreams*, written at the very beginning of the fifth century AD, a few years before Proclus was born, offers an idiosyncratic version of the Neoplatonist philosophical view of *phantasia* as the faculty of imagination. Toward the end of the work Synesius emphasizes the strength of our emotional reactions to the images seen in dreams and the need to use the right words to convey such reactions, in a way which recalls the descriptions of the emotional effects of successful visualization found in texts such as *On Sublimity* or *On the Life and Poetry of Homer* (*On Dreams* 154A).

Phantasia as a Means of Going Beyond Everyday Experience

So much for *phantasia* as visualization. My second notion of imagination, as that which is capable of reaching beyond our everyday experience, is much less common in ancient thought but, in the form of "creative imagination," has become the most common use of the term in modern aesthetic contexts at least since the time of the Romantics. Those who seek for the ancient roots of the modern concept of creative imagination regularly cite a passage from Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (6.19) which contrasts imitation (*mimēsis*) and imagination (*phantasia*).

> "What about sculptors like Phidias and Praxiteles? Surely they did not go up to heaven, model the forms of the gods and then reproduce them by

> their art? Was there something else which presided over their moulding?"
>
> "There was something else," said Apollonius, "something full of wisdom."
>
> "What sort of thing was that?" asked Thespesion. "You cannot mean anything other than imitation [*mimēsis*]."
>
> "It was imagination [*phantasia*], a wiser craftsman than imitation, which made those things," he replied. "Imitation will fashion what it has seen, whereas imagination can also fashion what it has not seen, since it will conceive of that with reference to what actually exists. Moreover imitation is often disrupted by shock; nothing disrupts imagination which proceeds unperturbed in pursuit of what it has conceived."

However, this passage is not really about creative imagination in the modern sense. The imagination which, according to Philostratus, has made it possible for Phidias and Praxiteles to model the forms of the gods is a faculty which has given these sculptors the ability to conceive of divine entities they cannot see, not an ability to create something entirely new. To understand the words Philostratus puts into Apollonius' mouth, we need to investigate philosophical uses of the term *phantasia* more fully.

The noun *phantasia* is related to the verb *phainomai*, "I appear," and is always connected in some way with appearance. Hence the use of *phantasia* to mean the appearance or impression we receive when we perceive something. This use is especially important in Epicurean and Stoic epistemology but is not directly relevant to my discussion in this chapter. Rather than spending time on the epistemological sense of the term, we need to go back, once again, to Plato. Plato, notoriously, is dismissive of appearances. For him the supreme element in the human soul is rational and he always places the highest value on knowledge and intellectual endeavor. Of course Plato is ambivalent, to say the least, in his attitude to the arts but he does sometimes seem to place some value on them, despite his consistent view that artists lack knowledge. In the Platonic tradition art is seen as arousing the emotions, as we have already seen, and artistic creativity is associated with inspiration rather than imagination. However, there is a "minority view," also ultimately derived from Plato, which puts imagination and inspiration together, although in connection with prophecy rather than with the arts (Sheppard 1997a). At the same time both Cicero (*Orator* 2.8–9) and Seneca (*Letter* 65.7) suggest that the artist imitates not an object in the physical world but an idea within his mind, derived from the world of Platonic Forms, and Cicero, like Philostratus, refers to Phidias as an example of a sculptor who could portray the divine by contemplating such an idea. Philostratus' contrast between *mimēsis* and *phantasia* should be seen in the eclectic, but broadly Platonizing, context to which these passages of Cicero and Seneca also belong.

The final stage of Greek philosophy, Neoplatonism, inherits and develops a

combined Platonic and Aristotelian tradition and here we find some interesting uses of the concept of imagination, although its full potential is not developed. Much Neoplatonist psychology is based on Aristotle. *Phantasia* does have a specific place in the psychology of Aristotle's *De anima*, between perception and thought. What in Aristotle are psychological capacities, things we do with our souls, are presented as faculties in Neoplatonism. For the Neoplatonists the soul has a hierarchical structure, parallel to the hierarchical structure of their metaphysics. Intellectual faculties come at the top, sense-perception a good deal lower down. *Phantasia* falls between thought of any kind and sense-perception, sometimes above and sometimes below *doxa*, opinion or belief.

The crucial Neoplatonist discussion of imagination is that of Plotinus in *Ennead* 4.3.30–31. In this text Plotinus argues that there are two "image-making powers," one which receives images from sense-perception, as in Aristotle, and one which receives images from the intellect. He even talks about "two souls" – that is, "higher" and "lower" parts of the soul. This notion of a "double imagination" seems to be original to Plotinus. It is not much used as such in later Neoplatonism, but the idea that the imagination can receive images from the intellect as well as from sense-perception is developed by others.

Some particularly interesting, but fragmentary, material can be found in Iamblichus, a philosopher who belongs to the generation of Neoplatonists following Plotinus. A commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* attributed to the sixth-century AD Neoplatonist Simplicius, but possibly in fact by Priscian, reports Iamblichus' view of *phantasia* as follows: "For even if, as Iamblichus wants, <*phantasia*> takes an impression of all our rational activities, nevertheless it produces images of Forms which have shape and parts in the manner of perceptible things" (Simplicius, *Commentary on the De anima* 214.18–20). The phrase "takes an impression of all our rational activities" may be an Iamblichean way of expressing Plotinus' higher image-making power. This is taken further in a long passage of Priscian's *Metaphrasis of Theophrastus* where Priscian presents as "the views of Iamblichus" the idea that *phantasia* has a dual role: on the one hand it awakens reflections from perception to *doxa*, and on the other it holds out secondary reflections of intellect (*nous*) to *doxa*. According to Priscian, Iamblichus saw *phantasia* as existing as subsidiary to all the faculties of the soul and as characterized by its power to form images (*Metaphrasis of Theophrastus* 23.13–24.20).

What is included in "secondary reflections of intellect"? Mathematical images would belong here (Sheppard 1997b), and also prophecy and divination, picking up the "minority view" referred to above. I said earlier that in the Platonic tradition artistic creativity is usually associated with inspiration rather than imagination. We can see the "minority view" or "variant tradition" lying behind two passages of Iamblichus' *De mysteriis*, 3.14 and 3.2–3. In

3.14 Iamblichus is discussing how the power of imagination can become inspired by the gods in prophecy, while in 3.2–3 he discusses divination in dreams and argues that the soul receives purer images of gods, incorporeal substances, and the intelligible when it is asleep and only its intellectual and divine part is active. However, Iamblichus does not develop this notion of imagination to include literature and art.

We have seen that both Synesius and Proclus, a century and more after Iamblichus, are still familiar with the literary critical concept of *phantasia* as visualization. Synesius is part of the "variant tradition" which does associate *phantasia* with inspiration but, like Iamblichus, he is primarily interested in prophetic dreams (Sheppard 1997a, 204–206). Proclus uses a theory of inspired poetry to defend Homer against Plato's criticisms in the *Republic*. He subjects such poetry to allegorical interpretation, arguing firmly that most of Homer is not mimetic – not realistic representation, we might say – but he makes no appeal to any connections between *phantasia* and inspiration.

Allegorical interpretation was widespread in late antiquity but the writing of extended deliberate allegory, such as we find in the Christian writer Prudentius, for example, was only just beginning. The idea that art represents transcendent realities in an allegorical or symbolic way would fit well with a theory of imagination such as we find in Kant, which stresses art's power to conjure up an image that points beyond itself (Kant, *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* §49). We might expect that Plotinus, Iamblichus, Synesius, or Proclus would have developed such a theory, but they do not seem to have done so. By the Neoplatonic period all the materials were present for developing a notion of imagination as conveying a "higher world" in literature and art but no thinker puts them all together, perhaps because the influence of Plato's denigration of appearances is still too strong.

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FURTHER READING

Bundy (1927) offers what is still the fullest available survey of ancient views of imagination while Cocking (1991) is a less detailed survey which extends from Classical times to the modern period. Watson (1988) presents a descriptive account of *phantasia* from Plato to Augustine and Boethius; Watson (1994) is another version of chapters 4–6 of Watson (1988), with some abbreviation. Particular aspects are covered in more detail by other authors: the first chapter of Meijering (1987) discusses *phantasia* as visualization, offering many examples of relevant texts; Zanker (1981) is a study of the development and use of the concept of *enargeia* (vividness) in ancient literary criticism, with some discussion of its relationship to the concept of *phantasia*; Dillon (1986) is a study of Plotinus' view of imagination, with some remarks on its relevance to aesthetics and on later Neoplatonist views. Translated source material on *phantasia* from Aristotle and his commentators, with brief comments and useful further bibliography, can be found in Sorabji (2004). The most recent book on the whole topic is Sheppard (2014), which deals not only with *phantasia* as visualization but also with Neoplatonist views of imagination, inspiration, and related topics at greater length than has been possible in this chapter.

NOTES

1 The use of the Latin word *imaginatio* by Augustine, Boethius, and others is a separate topic which it is not feasible to cover here. Some relevant material is discussed in Watson (1988 , ch. 6).

2 Cf. also *Rhetoric* 2.8.1386b5–7; 3.2.1405b11–12; 3.10.1410b33–35; 3.10.1411a25ff.; 3.11.1411b22–31; *De anima* 3.3.427b17–20; *De memoria* 449b30–450a5.

3 The reference to Apollodorus is to his distress at Socrates' impending death in Plato, *Phaedo* 117d; the reference to Achilles is to his mourning for Patroclus in Homer, *Iliad* 18.317–342.

CHAPTER 24
Beauty

David Konstan

> There might be an argument for taking a longer or wider view of the question of beauty, which has been under debate in western thought at least since the ancient Greek philosophers.
>
> Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Beauty and Art 1750–2000*, 10

Introduction

Ever since the invention of the term "aesthetics" by the Berlin philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in the mid-eighteenth century, the core concept of the idea has been beauty. As Arthur Danto puts it (2003, xiv): "From the eighteenth century to early in the twentieth century, it was the presumption that art should possess beauty." Danto goes on to observe that beauty began to lose its pre-eminence in the twentieth century, "as if attractiveness was somehow a stigma, with its crass commercial implications" (p. 7); so too, Elizabeth Prettejohn remarks (2005, 9): "During the past thirty years the beauty of the work of art has seemed secondary to the work's ideological functions." Danto himself celebrates the decoupling of aesthetics from beauty: "I regard the discovery that something can be good art without being beautiful as one of the great conceptual clarifications of twentieth-century philosophy of art" (2003, 58), although there are some indications that beauty is again on the agenda of art criticism (Prettejohn 2005, 10, citing Steiner 2001, xv). My concern here, however, is with what we may call the prehistory of aesthetics, and more specifically the conception of beauty in Classical Greece: did the Greeks, like moderns who admired them, consider beauty an essential feature of art as well, or did they too conceive of art that might be good without being beautiful? And what, for that matter, did beauty mean for the ancient Greeks?

Beauty in Greek: The Problem

At the very start of the investigation, however, we face a fundamental and well-known problem: did the ancient Greeks in fact have a concept analogous to what we call beauty? Serious scholars of the Classical world have argued that ancient Greek possessed no word that unambiguously signified "beauty" or "beautiful." The word that is most often translated as "beautiful" is the Greek adjective *kalós* (the root appears in the English "calisthenics" and "kaleidoscope"). Now, although *kalós* can mean "beautiful" in particular

contexts, it is also applied to such items as clothes, armor, and manufactured articles, where we might think rather of their being "well-wrought," as well as to such items as laws, knowledge, and other abstract notions. As the authoritative dictionaries point out, *kalós* has a range of meanings broad enough to include "good," "of fine quality," and also, in a moral sense, "noble" and "honorable." If one adds the definite article to the (neuter) adjective, producing the phrase *to kalón* or "the beautiful," the sense is equally wide: the standard *Greek–English Lexicon*, edited by Liddell and Scott, indeed defines the phrase as meaning "beauty" but also as "virtue" and "honor."

In a recent issue of the journal *Classical Philology* dedicated to the topic, "Beauty, Harmony, and the Good," Aryeh Kosman affirms that Aristotle's observations concerning *kalós* and its congeners are only puzzling "to the degree that we render *kalon* as 'beautiful' and the *kalon* as 'beauty' or 'the beautiful.'" Kosman offers Aristotle's discussion of courage as an example, and notes that when Aristotle writes that "a courageous person endures and acts as he does *kalou heneka*" (*Eth. Nic*. 1115b23), translators quite correctly take him to mean that he or she does so "not for the sake of the beautiful, but for the sake of the noble" (Kosman 2010 , 344–345). In connection with Plato's dialogue, *Hippias Major*, which is entirely devoted to defining *kalós*, Kosman affirms: "there is a deep history of uncertainty about how properly to translate *kalon*" (p. 346), and he concludes that the ambiguities associated with the term "leave me with the urge, an urge that I will of course resist, to say that the Greeks had no concept of beauty. But this much is right: the concept of beauty is sufficiently different from that of the *kalon* to make the urge understandable."

In the same issue of *Classical Philology*, Rachel Barney begins her paper by remarking: "How the fine (*kalon*) is related to the good (*agathon*) in Plato's thought is a puzzle" (Barney 2010, 363). Barney's use of the word "fine," which is perhaps the most common rendering of *kalós* in English today, evades the problem of the connection between *kalón* and beauty, although Barney later wonders why, in that case, the response prompted by the *kalón*, according to Plato, "is *erōs*, not admiration" (p. 375) – a point to which I return below. Terence Irwin, however, is prepared to see ambiguity, or homonymy, in the meaning of *kalón*: as he puts it, "Aristotle uses *kalon* both to pick out beauty and to pick out moral rightness" (Irwin 2010, 382), although ethics, in Irwin's view, concerns moral rightness only, without any suggestion that morality and beauty somehow coincide. If one wants to employ a single term to cover all of Aristotle's uses of *kalón*, however, Irwin counsels against using "beautiful," and suggests that "fine" or "admirable" is better (p. 396). Anton Ford, in his response to Irwin's paper, quotes Aristotle's own definition of *kalón* in the *Rhetoric* (1366a33–34), which Ford translates as follows: "that which is both desirable for its own sake and

praiseworthy, or that which pleases because it is good" (Ford 2010, 400). This does sound as though Aristotle is at least associating *kalón* and desire, whatever he might mean by "praiseworthy;" but a stricter rendering of Aristotle's words puts even this in doubt, for what Aristotle's text actually says is more like this: "*kalón* is whatever is choiceworthy [*haireton*] for its own sake and praiseworthy, or that which is good [*agathon*] and pleasing [*hēdu*] because it is good." "Choiceworthy" is an ethical term, very common in Aristotle and far from the notion of passionate desire; thus, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1097a30–b4), Aristotle explains that we choose happiness for its own sake, and choose things that contribute to happiness for its sake. But Umberto Eco, in his book *History of Beauty*, states unequivocally: "In fact, Beauty had no autonomous stature in ancient Greece" (Eco 2004, 37), and he adds: "The very word *Kalón*, which only improperly may be translated by the term 'beautiful,' ought to put us on our guard" (p. 39). That a specific term was lacking is not in itself evidence, of course, that the Greeks lacked a notion of the beautiful; but it clearly does make it more difficult to isolate just what they thought it was.

There are, to be sure, contrary voices raised in defense of the Greek idea of beauty. Drew Hyland, in his recent book-length study of Plato's conception of beauty (2008, 4–5), affirms that the word *kalós* "actually resembles the contemporary use of the English 'beauty' in the enormous range of its meaning. To be sure," he notes, "it means 'beauty' in the fairly narrow and standard sense that we have come to call 'aesthetic.' But the Greek especially shades toward the sense of 'nobility …' In turn, the word can shade into the sense of 'good' in an extra-moral sense, as in 'that's a good idea' or 'you speak well,'" like the way the English word "beautiful" is used today. Hyland notes that translators of works such as the *Hippias Major* often choose "fine" rather than "beauty" in rendering *kalós*, but he objects that the word thereby "loses the connection to the more obvious cases, as in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, where 'beauty' is clearly the word called for." Hyland concludes by affirming that, "even when the meaning of the word is stretched, I shall translate *to kalon* and its cognates as forms of 'beauty,' occasionally adding 'and noble' when the term is clearly appropriate." But this final concession is telltale: despite a willingness to admit a rather wide semantic stretch, Hyland at least sometimes finds himself obliged to create a hendiadys of the form "beautiful and noble," in order to make sense in English of the way the term *kalós* is employed in Greek. And this raises the question of how one can be sure that, even in what may seem to be "more obvious cases," the term in fact corresponds to the English "beautiful."

Beauty in Greek: A Solution

And yet, despite Kosman's and Eco's doubts about whether the very notion of beauty existed in Classical Greece (and they are representative of a widely

held view), there is in fact a Classical Greek word that comes much closer to the modern notion of beauty. Indeed, if *kalón* is too broad in its signification, this other term is rather more narrow in its application than the English "beauty." The word in question is the noun *kállos*, etymologically related to *kalós* but distinct from *kalós* in its usage. As it happens, there exists no detailed study of the meaning of this term, and yet it is crucial, I believe, to an understanding of how the Greeks conceived of beauty. As we shall see, the primary meaning of *kállos* refers to physical beauty, above all the beauty associated with erotic attraction. Like most fundamental concepts, however, *kállos* evolved and shifted meanings over time, and it could be applied as well to such things as works of art and certain kinds of speech, though it was not, I think, used in reference to a painting or poem as such, in the way we speak of a beautiful work of art (in his brief treatment of the term, Pollitt [1974 , 193] overstates its scope: "The semantic range of *kállos* is as simple or complex as 'beauty,' 'Schönheit' or any other word denoting the same quality").

To begin at the beginning: in the *Iliad*, the gods are said to have granted Bellerophon *kállos* and *ēnoreēn erateinēn*, "desirable manhood" (6.156); the adjective *erateinēn* is related to *erōs*, and it is telling, since his host's wife will fall passionately in love with him (it is a Potiphar's wife type tale); this is a characteristic response to *kállos*, and it helps to define its role in Greek patterns of thought. Paris too is beautiful: after Aphrodite has whisked him from the battlefield, she tells Helen that "Paris is in your bedroom and your well-turned bed, glowing in his beauty and garments" (*Iliad* 3.391–392); it was his beauty that caused Helen to run off with him, and the scene of her enamorment is implicitly repeated or reprised here in the *Iliad*. Achilles describes a woman's consummate beauty as rivaling that of Aphrodite (*Iliad* 9.389), who is of course the epitome of beauty; the Hellenistic poet Theocritus describes Aphrodite as excelling all the goddesses in beauty (17.45). In the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*, Aphrodite falls in love with Anchises, who has his beauty from the gods (5.77), whereas she herself possesses "immortal beauty" (174); Zeus, for his part, seized Ganymede because of his *kállos* (203). Xenophon, in the *Memorabilia*, observes that the beauty of the courtesan Theodote was said to overpower reason (3.11.1). This sense of *kállos* is confirmed in a number of erotic Hellenistic epigrams (e.g. *Palatine Anthology* 5.70, 73, 92, 120, 140, 196, 12.110).

The contrast between the noun and the adjective emerges clearly in Theocritus 23.32, where the poet states the commonplace notion that "a boy's beauty [*kállos*] is a fine thing [*kalón*], but it endures a short while." There is a similar distinction evident in the Septuagint, 1 Esdras 4:18 (this book has no equivalent in the Hebrew Bible). In the Revised Standard Version, the verse is translated: "If men gather gold and silver or any other beautiful thing [*pan pragma hōraion*], and then see a woman lovely in appearance [*kalēn tōi eidei*] and beauty [*tōi kállei*] …." The expression, "lovely in beauty," is redundant,

and it is better to take *kalēn* in the sense of "outstanding" or the like, and render the phrase: "excellent in stature and in beauty." I may cite here a slightly more technical illustration: in the Homeric Catalogue of Ships, the obscure hero Nireus is described as "the most beautiful [*kállistos*] man who came beneath Ilium of all the Danaans after the blameless son of Peleus. But he was weak, and a small group followed him" (*Iliad* 2.671–675). *Kállistos* is the superlative form of the adjective *kalós*, but here it evidently indicates Nireus' physical beauty rather than his nobility of birth or character, and was so understood by later commentators. Now, the *Etymologicum Magnum* (a Byzantine lexicon) reports:

> *Kallíōn* and *kállistos*: not from *kalós*, but rather from *kállos*. Both the spelling and the sense make this clear: the spelling, since *kalós* is written with one lambda, *kállos* with two; the sense, since the poet [i.e. Homer] usually applies *kalós* to manliness, just as, on the contrary, he applies *kakón* to weakness – but he knows that Nireus is weak, and nevertheless he says of him, "Nireus, who was the *kállistos* man who came beneath Ilium."

There is no basis to the argument that the comparative and superlative forms are derived specifically from the noun *kállos*; but the passage does show that whoever wrote this comment perceived that *kállos* generally indicated physical beauty, and that the adjective *kalós* had a far wider range of meanings and, when applied to adult men, most often connoted moral excellence or courage.

Beauty and Desire

Beauty is not only specific, in the main, to the human form in early Greek literature (there are one or two exceptions); it is also – as the above survey suggests – closely associated with sexual attractiveness and desire. The term is applied most often to women or to young men, who were objects of sexual interest; when it is applied to more mature men, it typically bears a negative connotation. Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 1.2.24) observes that Alcibiades was pursued by many women on account of his beauty, and he was courted by men on account of his allies and abilities as well. In Plato's *Symposium*, Alcibiades notoriously puts himself in the position of Socrates' *paidika* or boy love, in the hopes of seducing the older man to be his lover (218E): for a mature man, this is an extraordinary posture to adopt, even if he insists it is in hope of moral improvement. The novelist Longus, writing in the second century AD, observes in the prologue to *Daphnis and Chloe* (1.4): "No one has ever escaped or will escape love, as long as beauty [*kállos*] exists and eyes can see." The term *kállos* thus seems to suggest not so much "beauty" in the latitudinous sense in which it applies to anything that is fine, such as a work of art, but something more like "prettiness" or even "sexiness." The noun is thus considerably more restricted in its application than the adjective *kalós*: to put

the matter in a paradoxical way, we might say that Classical Greek had a word meaning "beauty" (*kállos*), but no word that meant, precisely, "beautiful."

The Greeks had their virgin goddesses, of course, most notably Athena and Artemis, and in the many statues that represent them they appear beautiful to us (though Athena in particular, fully armed with spear and helmet, wears a rather formidable look, in contrast to some of the decidedly sexy images of Aphrodite). Yet, the term *kállos*, though applied to Aphrodite, is rarely attributed to Artemis or to Athena. When the epigrammatist Rufinus (*Palatine Anthology* 5.70) writes to a beloved: "You have the *kállos* of Cypris [i.e. Aphrodite], the mouth of Persuasiveness, the body and youth of the Spring Seasons, the voice of Calliope, the mind and modesty of Themis, the arms of Athena; the four Graces are with you, Phile," *kállos* is specific to Aphrodite, whereas Athena seems a symbol of strength (most likely for weaving, I should think) and the Muse of singing. It would have been unseemly, I expect, to apply the term "prettiness" to an imposing and mature female figure such as Athena. Not that Artemis' physical beauty was necessarily always suppressed: Odysseus compares Nausicaa to the goddess when he praises her (*Odyssey* 6.149–152), though he does not employ the word *kállos*. What is more, certain situations might evoke the potentially erotic aspect of Artemis or other goddesses not normally conceived of in this fashion. Thus, Michael Squire notes that in paintings of Actaeon accidentally spying on the naked Artemis in her bath, Artemis' pose resembles that of a particularly lubricious statue of Aphrodite: "The story of Actaeon's exemplarily transgressive view of the naked Artemis must at some level *always* have intersected with responses to the Praxitelean statue [of Aphrodite]" (Squire 2011, 105; cf. p. 108). Libanius, in his praise of the city Antioch, records that Ptolemy was smitten by the beauty of Artemis (*to kállos tēs Artemidos*), and carried her off from Antioch to Egypt (*Orations* 11.109). We might ourselves imagine that Ptolemy was responding to the beauty of the statue, which is of course what he abducted, but the Greek makes no such distinction between the goddess and her image. I suspect that *kállos* is applied to Artemis in order to account for Ptolemy's aberrant desire.

The lesson so far, then, is that a crucial term signifying "beauty" in Classical Greek is indeed closely associated with desire – but it is not primarily an aesthetic concept so much as a stimulus of human sexuality. It was a commonplace that beauty, and with it sexual desire, entered through the eyes. Moreover, since Greek sexuality was characteristically conceived of as asymmetrical, in which a lover (*erastēs*) – usually masculine and adult – was enamored of a woman or boy, *kállos* is ascribed typically to the beloved, the one who inspires passion. One would not expect a Heracles or a Theseus to be described as "pretty," except perhaps when they were young; thus, Libanius says that Ariadne fell in love with Theseus precisely because of his lovely youth (*hōra*: *Orations* 11.81). So too, because Achilles is represented as

young in the *Iliad*, Plato, or a character in his *Symposium* (180A–B), was disposed to believe that Patroclus was his lover. The fourth-century AD orator Themistius permits himself to expatiate on the beauty of the emperor Gratian and indeed to place himself in the role of lover, since Gratian is still very young and Themistius himself is now advanced in years; even so, he is careful to provide a modest philosophical veneer to his passion, insisting that he suffered for a long while and "endured pangs over the passion for that beauty which philosophy had portrayed for him, for a youth noble and attractive, who blended both beauties, those of the soul and the body" (164C; see Konstan 2013 for discussion). Greek beauty is closely connected to Greek styles of *erōs*. Aristotle is exceptional in declaring that there is a kind of *kállos* that is appropriate to every age, whether young, at the acme of life, or old – the last characterized by sufficient strength for necessary labor (*Rhetoric* 1361b7–14).

Beauty and Art

Nevertheless, *kállos* has a wider extension even in the earliest Greek literature. Already in Homer, the term is ascribed to a handsome cup (*Iliad* 23.740–743), which Achilles offers as a prize to the swiftest runner in the funeral games for Patroclus; it is a desirable item, and perhaps *kállos* suggests not just its craftsmanship but the kind of attractiveness that arouses a wish to possess it. The application of the term to art seems to have taken off, however, especially with the publication of the so-called "Canon" of Polyclitus, a treatise composed toward the end of the fifth century BC, in which the sculptor laid out his artistic principles and illustrated them, it is thought, in his famous statue, the *Spearbearer* (*Doryphoros*). Polyclitus's work was immensely popular. Based on our fragmentary evidence, he emphasized above all symmetry and harmony among the parts of the body. And yet, Polyclitus' interest in the human figure may well have been more conventionally erotic than is commonly supposed (cf. Delivorrias 1995). Plato, in his discussion of art as imitation in the tenth book of the *Republic*, applies the word to such things as furniture or implements (*skeuos*): whoever makes the thing will have the correct opinion concerning its beauty and defectiveness (*ponēria*), provided that he associates with and heeds the one who uses it: it is the latter who has actual knowledge (601E). By "beauty" here Plato seems to mean something like functionality, which would best be judged by the person who employs the item, but he presumably has in mind also its correct proportions or dimensions; thus he speaks of the "virtue and beauty and correctness" (*aretē kai kállos kai orthotēs*) of a utensil or animal or action (601D), the three abstract terms being roughly synonymous (a few lines later he contrasts *ponēros* rather with *khrēstos*, "useful" 602B). The noun *kállos* is found also in connection with language in this period: thus, in Plato's *Symposium* (198B4–5), Socrates responds to Agathon's eloquent

speech in praise of Eros, in which he dwells on the beauty of the god (cf. 196B4–5), by declaring: "who could hear the beauty [*kállos*] of your final words and phrases without being thunderstruck?" Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric* (1405b5–8), says that the beauty (*kállos*) of a word lies in the sounds or the sense. Aristotle's successor Theophrastus is reported to have defined *to kállos* as follows: "the *kállos* of a word is what is pleasing to hearing or to sight or noble in significance." The physicality of language is uppermost here. But the major treatises on style, for example by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Hermogenes of Tarsus, make it clear that stylistic beauty resides in the combination or *sunthesis* of the words, and in fact relate such harmonious composition to the symmetry of the human form. Thus, Hermogenes (second century AD) writes:

> In general, beauty is a symmetry of limbs and parts [*summetria melōn kai merōn*], along with a good complexion [*eukhroia*], and it is through these that a speech [*logos*] becomes [beautiful], whether entire types [of style] are combined into the same [speech] or they [i.e. the elements] make up each type individually, for these are, as it were, their limbs and parts. It is necessary, then, if a speech is to be beautiful [*kalós*], whether it is variegated or uniform, that it have symmetry among these, that is, harmony [*euarmostia*], and that a kind of good complexion bloom upon it, which takes the form of a single quality of character throughout, and which some indeed naturally call the color [*khrōma*] of a speech.
>
> (*Peri ideōn* 1.12.20–28)

Thus, it would appear that even when the term *kállos* is applied to non-human objects and indeed to abstract items such as literary style, it never loses its connection with the visible, and continues to bear, however lightly, overtones of erotic attractiveness. Speeches, after all, were imagined as exercising a quasi-magical power over their audiences, an ability to overcome reason not by the strict logic of their arguments but by their sonorousness and related stylistic effects. These were what made a speech "pretty": such prettiness was not the same thing as effectiveness or persuasiveness, but simply one element in a panoply of stylistic devices.

Transcendent Beauty

In the Classical period, but above all in Hellenistic and later texts, *kállos* is applied to particularly handsome animals (e.g. sheep and bulls, Diodorus Siculus 40.26.2, 40.27.1; the peacock, in a highly erotic context, Achilles Tatius 1.16.2, 1.19.1–2), and to flourishing landscapes and towns (cf. Diodorus Siculus 2.35.3 of India; 30.10.1 of the Nile region; 30.69.1, of a large cave; of rivers, Hermogenes, *Peri heureseōs* 2.2; cf. also Plutarch, *Life*

of Timoleon 22.1, etc.; of a city, *Life of Marcellus* 19.2, *Life of Cato the Elder* 12.5, etc.; see Menander Rhetor, *On the Division of Epideictic Oratory* 339.11–18, 352.6–25 Spengel). Indeed, Menander the Rhetor compares the attraction of a beautiful city directly to the passion experienced by a lover (*On Epideictic* 428.7–25 Spengel). But the principal association is still with the sense of sight.

When beauty is ascribed to entities, such as the soul, that are not immediately visible, there is often registered a suggestion of a transferred meaning. Aristotle, in taking notice of the fact that physical beauty is not necessarily a sign of excellent character, observes that it is "not equally easy to perceive the *kállos* of the soul and that of the body" (*Politics* 1254b38–39); the metaphorical extension of the term to the psychological realm is motivated here by the comparison with corporeal beauty. Most frequently, however, Aristotle employs *kállos* in its customary, physical sense (e.g. *Politics* 1282b37, 1284b10, 1290b5; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1123b7, 1231a2); like other writers, he commonly associates *kállos* with stature (*megethos*) and strength (e.g. *Rhetoric* 1361a2; cf. Isocrates, *Evagoras* 22). Plato affirms in the *Symposium* (210B) that one must value more highly beauty in souls than in the body; here again, it is by way of mentioning corporeal beauty that Plato passes to the idea of beauty residing in the psyche (cf. Plutarch, *Amatorius* 757E; *Philebus* 65E, where Socrates affirms that the mind, or *nous*, has a greater share of *kállos* than does pleasure). Most often, beauty is specifically physical, as in Plato's *Philebus* (26B5–7), where Socrates affirms: "I am leaving out thousands of other things in my comments, such as strength and *kállos* together with health, and in turn many other fine [*pankala*] things in the soul [*en psukhais*]." To be sure, Socrates waxes more metaphysical later in the dialogue, where he speaks of beauty not only in connection with perceptible shapes, which is, he acknowledges, how ordinary people (*hoi polloi*) speak, but also in respect to purely geometrical figures, of the sort produced by carpenters' instruments (for the universal fire as beautiful, cf. 29C1–3). Even here, though, the term continues to refer to visible forms (on the pleasure associated with beauty in this dialogue, see below).

Plato ascribed beauty in particular to his ideal forms, those immaterial universals that are visible only to the mind's eye – an expression that Plato may have coined (cf. *Symposium* 219A, *tēs dianoias opsis*; *Republic* 533D, *to tēs psukhēs omma*; *Sophist* 254A, *tēs psukhēs ommata*; but cf. the expression, *tois tēs doxēs ommasin*, "eyes of belief," Gorgias, *Defense of Helen* 13; *teī tēs gnōmēs opsei*, Hippocrates, *On the Art* 11). But Plato was exceptional in explaining the attraction of the mind to the transcendental sphere as a function precisely of erotic passion; as Alexander Nehamas has observed, for Plato "beauty is the object of love, the quarry of *erōs*" (Nehamas 2007, 9). If we bear in mind the connotations associated with the word *kállos*, we shall be less surprised to discover that, according to Plato, the soul is drawn to this higher

realm of being by *erōs*, that is, passionate love (cf. *Phaedrus* 254–55, *Republic* 403A, 475B, 476B–C, 485A–B, 499B–C).

Plato's bold theory exercised a powerful influence on the evolution of one strand in the modern conception of aesthetics. But Plato was not speaking of the beauty of art (he is the man who banished Homer from his ideal state). The Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus, who again was interested above all in the supra-sensory realm, begins his essay on beauty (*Enneads* 1.6.1): "*To kalón* is principally in sight," but he immediately adds: "but it is also in hearing in respect to the composition of words, and in every kind of music as well; for melodies and rhythms are *kaloí*. And, as we proceed higher and away from sensation [*aisthēsis*], there are habits that are beautiful [*kalá*], and actions, and characters, and kinds of knowledge [*epistēmai*], and there is a beauty [*kállos*] of virtues." One sees here an easy and natural slippage between *kállos* and *kalós*, which smooths the transition from visible to more abstract entities, since *kalós* is the appropriate adjective for fine or noble actions and traits; thus, there is something of a surprise effect when Plotinus concludes his climactic sequence by referring to the *kállos* of the virtues, since this suggests a perceptible kind of beauty. Indeed, Plotinus is moved shortly afterward to inquire whether all things are beautiful by virtue of one and the same beauty (*heni kai tōi autōi kalōi*), or whether there is one kind of *kállos* in the body, and another in other things – a question which, as we shall see, continues to be debated among modern writers on aesthetics. Beauty, then, basically attaches to what is visible, and it is only by extension that it is applied to intangible things. Art, and such natural features as rivers and mountains, and indeed cities, could be seen as possessing beauty and often as stimulating a kind of desire (many of the references to beautiful places are to be found in distinctly erotic contexts). Indeed, Plato goes so far as to compare the attraction of pictorial (*graphikē*) and representational (*mimētikē*) art generally to that of a hetaera or courtesan (*Republic* 10.603A–B; cf. Halliwell 2011, 184–185; Peponi 2012, 128–140). As Clitopho, the protagonist of the novel by Achilles Tatius (second century AD), wanders the streets of Alexandria, he describes himself as "desperately in love with the sight of it" (*pros tēn opsin duserōtiōn*, 5.1.5).

Can a Picture of Something Ugly Be Beautiful?

In this regard, we may consider a question that has exercised modern aesthetics, namely, whether a painting or statue of an ugly object can be said to be beautiful. Ancient thinkers were aware that one could admire a fine representation of a disagreeable object. The point is made by Plato and Aristotle; and Plutarch, in his essay *How a Youth should Listen to Poems*, explains: "imitating something excellent [*kalós*] is not the same as doing it excellently [*kalōs*]" (18D). But "excellent" or "fine" is not the same thing as "beautiful," and for ancient thinkers an excellent representation was simply

faithful to the object: this is the relevant sense of *mimēsis* in these contexts. Plutarch is indebted here to Aristotle, who observes in the *Poetics*:

> imitation is innate in human beings from when they are children, and they differ from other animals in this, that they are the most imitative creature and acquire their first learning through imitation, and all take pleasure [*khairousi*] in imitations [*mimēmata*]. A sign of this is what happens in craft-works [*erga*]: for we enjoy contemplating the most precisely done images of the very things we view with pain, for example the forms of the basest animals and corpses.
>
> (1448b5–12)

Aristotle explains that the pleasure we feel at a good imitation derives from our joy in learning and reasoning, which we exercise when we recognize a likeness; there is no question of beauty here. Plutarch himself is concerned with accurate representations in literature of morally deficient individuals, and means to say that a poet is obliged to portray such characters as they are, not as they should be. In Lucian's monologue, *Zeuxis and Antiochus*, the speaker explains that he, like the great painter Zeuxis, is indifferent to praise based on the novelty of his compositions. Zeuxis and the speaker prefer that their art be judged by those capable of recognizing their technical skill (2.5), such as precise lines, good mixture of colors, and satisfactory proportions, the criteria by which experts evaluate craftsmanship. Beauty is mentioned only in connection with the upper part of the female Centaur depicted in the painting, which is described as *pankalon* (except for the ears, 6). The ignorant crowd that looks only to innovation, says Zeuxis, "praise only the dross, but take little account of whether it is well made [*kalōs ekhei*] and in accord with art in relation to light" (7). Again, Philostratus the Elder calls a picture of a spider *kalá*; the reference is not to its beauty but to the accuracy of the painter's technique in drawing it in accord with nature (*kata tēn phusin*), right down to its awful fuzz; this is the mark, says Philostratus, of a good craftsman (2.28.3).

Modern art critics, however, are deeply divided on whether a representation of something ugly can be deemed beautiful. Arthur Danto, who as we saw applauds the separation of aesthetic quality from beauty, affirms categorically that Matisse's radical painting, *Blue Nude* (1907, the same year in which Picasso painted his *Desmoiselles d'Avignon*), "is a good, even a great painting – but someone who claims it is beautiful is talking through his or her hat" (Danto 2003 , 36–37). But Alexander Nehamas takes objection to Danto's claim precisely in connection with the *Blue Nude*, when he states: "As long as we continue to identify beauty with attractiveness and attractiveness with a power of pleasing quickly and without much thought or effort, we can't even begin to think of many of the twentieth century's great works as beautiful" (Nehamas 2007, 29–30). The entire conundrum, it seems to me, is the consequence of the particular take on beauty that emerged in the eighteenth

century, and whose influence is still palpable. It is not a problem that, so far as I can judge, arose in Classical Greek views of art, which were framed in a vocabulary that did not entirely overlap with modern conceptions of beauty.

Is There Beauty Without Desire?

The tension between beauty conceived of as a source of erotic attraction and as a category of aesthetics more generally has been the cause of other puzzles for modern critics of art. Thus, Roger Scruton writes in his recent book, *Beauty* (2009, 54):

> There are no greater tributes to human beauty than the medieval and Renaissance images of the Holy Virgin: a woman whose sexual maturity is expressed in motherhood and who yet remains untouchable, barely distinguishable, as an object of veneration, from the child in her arms … The Virgin's beauty is a symbol of purity, and for this very reason is held apart from the realm of sexual appetite, in a world of its own. This thought reaches back to Plato's original idea: that beauty is not just an invitation to desire, but also a call to renounce it.

Likewise, the beauty of a poem or an abstract sculpture is supposed to evoke something more like admiration, even reverence, rather than the kind of desire that can be described as erotic. As Scruton puts it, "In the realm of art beauty is an object of contemplation, not desire."

This view of the response to art as a distant, passionless form of contemplation is a familiar one, and found its most persuasive and authoritative expression in Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. But what, then, of the kind of beauty that arouses sexual attraction? As Scruton inquires immediately afterward, in words that echo Plotinus' question cited above: "Does this mean that there are two kinds of beauty – the beauty of people and the beauty of art?" Scruton rejects this solution, though where a human figure is represented, as in the case of the Virgin, the question takes on a particular saliency. Thus, Jerrold Levinson writes: "I would deny that human physical beauty can be detached from sexual attractiveness" (Levinson 2011 , 198). Ernst Gombrich, in turn, observes that this conception of the necessary sexuality of beauty goes right back to the Renaissance (Gombrich 1990). Even if we were to accept a distinction between our reaction to the image of a beautiful person in art and in real life, how can we explain why some representations of human beauty, for example that of the Virgin, hold us at a reverential distance whereas an image of, say, a sexy actress, whom we would likewise identify as beautiful, does not? Scruton is alert to the issue, which he poses rather in terms of the beauty of children. As he writes: "There is hardly a person alive who is not moved by the beauty of the perfectly formed child. Yet most people are horrified by the thought that this beauty should be a spur to desire, other than the desire to cuddle and comfort. … And yet the beauty

of a child is of the same kind as the beauty of a desirable adult, and totally unlike the beauty of an aged face." If indeed a child's beauty is like that of a sexually desirable adult, we may ask why the child is not desirable in the same way. Is it simply a matter of the repression of erotic desire in the case of certain kinds of beauty – what Scruton labels "the call to renounce" desire, that is at work?

The Greeks, it may be observed, very rarely ascribed *kállos* to young children, and generally considered sexual attractiveness to emerge when a girl reached an age at which she might potentially be regarded as marriageable. Thus, the so-called *Library* of Apollodorus informs us that Theseus carried off Helen "when she became outstanding for beauty" (3.128), that is, when she reached the age at which *kállos*, properly speaking, becomes manifest. In Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, Charicles relates his encounter with a mysterious dark-skinned man who hands over to him the child Chariclea, the novel's heroine, together with some birth tokens: "he took me to his place and showed me a girl of outstanding and divine beauty; he said she was seven years old, but to me she seemed approaching the age of marriage" (2.30.6). In *Daphnis and Chloe*, the two foundlings grow up to become exceptionally beautiful adolescents; the newborn Daphnis, however, is more discreetly described as "large and noble-looking" (*mega kai kalón*, 1.2.3); no comparable adjective is applied to the infant Chloe. I have found one example of beauty, that is, *kállos*, ascribed to a small child: in his account of early history, Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica* 2.4.5) describes how the infant Semiramis had been exposed and nourished by doves, until some farmers discovered her, "a baby of outstanding beauty" (*to brephos diapheron tōi kállei*). When she grew up, she proved similarly superior in beauty to all the other maidens (*tōi kállei polu tas allas parthenous diapherousēs*, 2.5.1); a noble in the Babylonian court first fell in love with her, and then King Ninus himself, who forced her husband to surrender her and made her his queen. Clearly, the infant's beauty was not such as to arouse sexual desire in her caretakers, but serves as an anticipation of her future power of attraction (Ovid tells us that Liriope, a most beautiful [*pulcherrima*] nymph, gave birth to an infant who even then could inspire love [*iam tum qui posset amari*, 3.344–345], a hint that his future beauty was already evident; his name was Narcissus).

There is, however, a passage in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* that would appear to endorse precisely a way of appreciating beauty that is removed from desire. Aristotle is discussing the virtue of temperance or *sōphrosunē*, and he observes: "Since a temperate person is so in regard to pleasures, it is necessary that he be so in regard to some desires." Aristotle goes on to specify that the desires or appetites (*epithumiai*) in question are principally those of touch and taste, or more simply touch, and he remarks that a person is not temperate "with regard to pleasure, through sight, in fine things [*kalá*], apart from a desire for sex, and in regard to distress at ugly things [*aiskhra*]," nor

again in regard to the pleasure taken in harmonious or unharmonious music by way of the sense of hearing, nor in that deriving from good or foul smells; for no one is considered to be intemperate for feeling or not feeling pleasure in such things. The provision, "apart from a desire for sex," indicates that Aristotle is thinking of pleasure distinct from the ordinary response to beauty. Aristotle goes on to say: "If, in fact, someone who is contemplating a fine [*kalós*] statue or horse or human being, or is listening to someone singing, does not wish [*bouloito*] to eat or drink or have sex but rather to contemplate the fine things [*ta kalá*] or listen to the singers, he would not seem to be intemperate." Aristotle notes further that animals, in contrast to human beings, are by nature more or less insensitive to pleasures other than touch and taste, for example in regard to harmony or beauty (*kállos*), for they seem to feel nothing in the contemplation of fine things (*ta kalá*) or in listening to what is harmonious. Thus, though many animals have a keen sense of smell, the pleasure they take in odors is incidental to their association with food; unlike human beings, they are incapable of enjoying the aroma of flowers in and of itself (3.2, 1230b21–1231a12). Although I have translated the adjective *kalós* as "fine," it is clear that Aristotle has in mind the response to beauty, at least in regard to visual pleasure, as indicated unambiguously by the noun *kállos* (thus, the Bollingen translation of Aristotle's complete works gives "temperance is shown not in regard to visual pleasure in the beautiful (so long as it is unaccompanied by sexual appetite) or visual pain in the ugly," Solomon 1984, 1949).

James Porter remarks on this passage that "what we find in Aristotle is in fact an interesting claim about pure aesthetic pleasure, and one comparable in ways to Kant's. It is a claim that wants to isolate the simple, unadorned act of aesthetic contemplation by itself, abstracted from all other impinging wants and desires" (2010, 53). Indeed, Porter goes on to say that Kant's idea of lingering in the contemplation of the beautiful "is a partial calque, though no doubt an unintentional one, on Aristotle" (2010, 54). We must, however, take the context into account. Aristotle is here discussing temperance or moderation, as part of an analysis of the several virtues. His point is that, whereas an excessive delight in sex, which is inspired by physical beauty, is the mark of the profligate, not all pleasures that result from seeing or hearing are to be judged in this way: there is nothing intemperate about the wish – Aristotle does not say "desire" – to look at a fine statue or listen to pleasing music when the appetites are not thereby aroused. These pleasures resemble the pure or unmixed pleasures that Plato describes, which do not satiate desires (and hence relieve a painful state) but are pleasant in themselves. Perfect geometrical shapes elicit such a pleasure, and possess beauty (*kállos*), Plato says, not of the sort people usually suppose when they think of living creatures or paintings, and the pleasure they produce is characteristically their own (*oikeia*, 51C). Certain odors, sounds (Plato calls them "smooth and bright"), and colors, such as pure white (51D, 53A–B), have this capacity, and

so does learning (52A–B). Aristotle is making a similar claim (adapted to his argument about temperance) about two kinds of pleasure. Those that do not satisfy appetites (*epithumiai*) are aesthetic in the Greek sense of the term, that is, they are perceived by senses (*aisthēseis*), but though Aristotle speaks of statues and songs, he is not isolating a response specific to art or even to beauty in its several manifestations (the term *kállos* is applied only to visual objects), but to naturally pleasing stimuli from statues to horses to the fragrance of blossoms. All this seems to me to be far removed from Kant's concerns. There was, accordingly, less likely to arise the kind of dilemma or confusion that besets the English term "beauty," with the peculiar sense it has acquired in modern aesthetic discourse.

Beauty and Goodness

Recently, Alexander Nehamas has raised a challenge to the notion of the disinterested contemplation of art. As though anticipating Scruton's characterization of Plato as calling for a renunciation of desire, Nehamas writes (2007, 2): "Plato and the ancients were not afraid of the risky language of passion because they thought that beauty, even the beauty of lowly objects, can gradually inspire a longing for goodness and truth." Modern approaches to aesthetics, according to Nehamas, have separated beauty from goodness, and in the process have stripped beauty of desire, since desire is, as a consequence, deprived of a noble object; but this is not to deny that, for Plato "and the long tradition that came after him," beauty inspires *erōs*. But binding *erōs* to goodness runs the risk of denaturing the passion that beauty evokes: "If beauty inspires the desire to possess and own its object or to use it for some further purpose, especially if it involves sex, it might seem reasonable to believe that those who value art for its beauty are either philistines or perverts" (Nehamas 2007 , 11). It is interesting that both Scruton and Nehamas feel able to appeal to the authority of Plato to support their positions on the relation between art and desire: where Scruton finds in Plato "a call to renounce" desire, Nehamas cites him for the idea that beauty rouses nothing less than *erōs* itself. Plato's spiritualized conception of beauty does lend itself to contrary interpretations, but taking account of the ancient Greek vocabulary for beauty helps us to see why this should be so. Beauty for the Greeks was never far from desire, and by and large they were not disposed to treat it simply as an object of disinterested contemplation, nor again as necessarily associated with goodness; indeed, it was more often supposed that beauty was an obstacle to virtue. Thus, the poet Tyrtaeus writes: "few are the people whom virtue and beauty accompany, and blessed is he who obtains one of these" (1.933–934). In Euripides' *Andromache* (207–208), Andromache tells her tormentor, Hermione: "it is not *kállos*, woman, but virtues that delight one's bedmate." In Euripides' *Helen*, Helen recalls the judgment of Paris concerning the *kállos* of the three goddesses (23) – of course, Aphrodite was

bound to win this contest – and laments her own fatal beauty. Electra, in Euripides' tragedy by that name, denounces a woman who beautifies herself (*es kállos askei*) as wicked, and a character in a lost play by Euripides (fr. 909) insists that *kállos*, as opposed to *aretē*, is of little help to a woman who would wed well (cf. Plutarch, *Conjugal Precepts* 141D). A hetaera needed to be beautiful, and there was no expectation that a respectable citizen woman would compete with a courtesan on this terrain.

The tension between beauty and goodness is especially visible in cases where physical attractiveness and spiritual goodness are imagined as residing in the same figure. In his recent book, *A Cultural History of Pain*, Javier Moscoso reflects on a fifteenth-century altarpiece consisting of a dozen paintings illustrating the life of Saint Marina, who was martyred in Pisidian Antioch in the third century. Marina was the daughter of a pagan priest named Edesius, who was the first to persecute her after she adopted the Christian faith. Subsequently, her beauty attracted the attention of Olymbrius, the local governor, who was prepared to marry her if she gave up her faith. Marina, needless to say, rejected the offer, and Olymbrius subjected her to terrible tortures, which miraculously failed to mar her beauty, before finally putting her to death by the sword. Moscoso observes:

> As opposed to the prefect …, her beauty depends on her strength of spirit and not on the configuration of her body. … The altarpiece exalts the spiritual beauty of the young woman by way of her body, which reappears intact and unaltered at the end of each torment and returns to its natural state after every blow. Her beauty, which is a constant point of reference in literary characterizations and pictorial representations, turns her body into a witness of the truth and a tabernacle of salvation.
>
> (Moscoso 2011, 28)

In this narrative and in the corresponding pictorial representation, a double role is assigned to Marina's beauty: on the one hand, it is just this trait that arouses the desire of the Roman prefect Olymbrius, and so it is clearly a carnal kind of beauty. On the other hand, her beauty is evidently supposed to be spiritual in nature, presumably of the sort that demands contemplation – the kind of beauty which, in Scruton's phrase, is not "an invitation to desire" but rather "a call to renounce it." What are the cues that make us, as readers of the narrative or viewers of the altarpiece, respond to her in a spirit of reverence rather than with sexual desire?

An entire genre in antiquity was dedicated to descriptions of paintings or other works of art (today, these are called ekphrases, although in Classical rhetoric the term could apply to any kind of descriptive set-piece), for instance those by the two Philostrati (Elder and Younger) and by Callistratus, in which representations of beautiful women are sometimes mentioned. Thus, the younger Philostratus writes of a painting of Hesione, who was, like

Andromeda, chained to a rock and exposed to a sea monster: "the circumstances to not allow me to represent the beauty [*kállos*] of the girl accurately, since her fear for her life and her anxiety over what she sees dim the bloom of her youthful attractiveness [*hōra*]" (12 = 884.8–12). Callistratus, who in the third or fourth century AD composed a series of ekphrases devoted to sculptures, describes a statue of Paean in more lyrical terms: "What we are seeing seems to me to be, not an image [*tupos*], but a fashioning of the truth [*tēs alētheias plasma*]. Look how art is not unable to represent character; rather, when it has made an image of the god it passes over to the god himself. Though it is matter, it breathes divine intelligence, and though it happens to be handiwork, it does what is not possible for handicrafts and in an ineffable way begets signs of the soul." Callistratus goes on to remark that "the face enthralls the senses of the viewer, for it has not been shaped for a superficial beauty [*kállos epitheton*] but it lifts its holy [*panagnon*] and propitious eyes and flashes forth an unutterable depth of majesty blended with modesty" (10.2). This passage comes as close as any I know to exploring the contrast between the representation of virtue and that of physical attractiveness, but the word "beauty" is reserved for the surface features of the god. Once again, a question that has beset modern aesthetics does not seem to have arisen for the ancient Greeks, or at least not in quite the same terms; and this invites us, in turn, to reconsider how the Greeks themselves may have appreciated the role of beauty, as they understood it, in their own art.

The Varieties of Aesthetic Response

Classical writers recognized various responses to what we think of as works of art, including pleasure, wonder or awe, a kind of magical enchantment, and certain emotions, often regarded as specific to one or another genre, as in Aristotle's association of pity and fear with tragedy. These and other responses were commonly thought of as being aroused by diverse aspects of an art work, and different writers tended to stress one or another factor. Fidelity to the object represented, for example, was most often regarded as the source of pleasure. We have already noted Aristotle's observation that everyone enjoys imitations, although Xenophon suggested more particularly that there is greater pleasure in the representation of good characters than of bad (at least this is the view he put in the mouth of the painter Parrhasius, *Memorabilia* 3.10.5). By contrast, the sublime or lofty (*hupsos*) was conceived of as inspiring awe or amazement; as Longinus writes in his treatise on the topic: "what is extraordinary draws listeners not to persuasion but rather to ecstasy [*ekstasis*]" (1.4), and he affirms that what is marvelous (*thaumasion*) and accompanied by shock (*ekplēxis*) overwhelms all else (for discussion, see Halliwell 2011 ; in modern Romanticism, the sublime largely displaced beauty as an aesthetic ideal, since beauty began to seem too insipid as a sign of artistic genius). Insofar as Longinus speaks of beauty, it is as a

feature of style that can have good effects or ill (5.1); it is associated with figures of speech (17.2, 20.1) and the choice of appropriate words, which can contribute, when properly deployed, to the effectiveness of the whole work. In this respect, he is in accord with the major writers on style in antiquity, as noted above. Demetrius (second or first century BC) identified four basic styles – plain, elevated, elegant, and forceful – and he held that beautiful effects might be in tension with and undermine forcefulness (252, 274). Hermogenes expanded the number of styles to seven: clearness, grandeur, beauty, poignancy, characterization, truth, and mastery (the last is the combined virtue of the first six; the translations of the technical terms are those of Rhys Carpenter); again, beauty is one device among others. Quintilian, indeed, says that those speakers who put the choice of words ahead of content do so, as they imagine, for the sake of beauty (*decor*), but in fact this kind of transparent and gaudy elocution, like women's clothing, feminizes whatever is clothed in such attire (*Institutio oratoria* 8.pr.18–20); prettiness in oratory risks sounding like harlotry. One can also respond to a work of art with approval or disapproval, that is, with an evaluation its moral content; this is, of course, the basis on which Plato excluded certain art forms from his ideal republic.

When it comes to emotion, the plot as a whole was, according to Aristotle, what arouses pity and fear, whereas mere stage effects, of the sort produced by costumes or scenery, generate merely a shudder. As he explains, "it is possible, to be sure, for what is frightening and pitiable to arise from visual effects, but it is also possible for it to arise from the arrangement of events itself, which is prior and pertains to the better poet" (*Poetics* 1453b1–14). Aristotle insists that one should be able to feel pity and fear simply by hearing the plot of the *Oedipus*, without seeing it enacted, and he goes on to observe: "Those who provide not what is frightening but merely what is monstrous [*to teratōdes*] via visual effect have nothing in common with tragedy. … Since the poet must provide pleasure from pity and fear through representation, it is clear that this must be embedded in the events." Seneca seems rather to have allowed that drama might elicit not just emotions but also what he called "preliminary starting points for emotions" (*principia proludentia adfectibus*, *De ira* 2.2.6); these responses are simple (*simplex*) as opposed to true emotions, which are compound and made up of multiple elements (*compositus et plura continens*, *De ira* 2.1.4). Among the "preliminary starting points," Seneca lists such items as goose pimples, an aversion to touching certain objects, the rising of one's hair upon hearing bad news, and the vertigo produced by heights, as well as the response to events seen on stage or in paintings, or read about in books, and he may have composed his own tragedies with this kind of effect in mind (see Staley 2010). But whether they spoke of emotions or pre-emotions, the Classical writers did not, so far as I have been able to determine, identify a special aesthetic emotion aroused by fine art or beauty as such.

Of course, there was no simple one-to-one correspondence between qualities of an art work and the response engendered in the beholder: pleasure in particular was a fairly generalized reaction, and might be inspired by the beauty of an image or especially sweet language. But the predominant response to beauty, as the Greeks conceived it, was desire, and it is here that we see most clearly that terminology matters. English and some other languages which employ the single term "beauty" to cover both human physical attractiveness and an ostensibly detached, aesthetic kind of beauty (especially since the birth of modern aesthetics) lend themselves to paradoxes that did not necessarily arise for those who thought in ancient Greek. Even if Classical Greece was in many ways the inspiration for modern aesthetic ideals, both in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, the Greek view of the relationship between beauty and desire was surprisingly consistent – and different from our own. By focusing on a Greek term that unambiguously means "beauty," though it does not have quite the ample extension of the modern English word – a word, moreover, whose significance has been all but wholly neglected in modern scholarship – we may see more clearly how the Greeks thought of beauty, and what it was that attracted them in art. Their perceptions may even have something to tell us about art and beauty today.

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FURTHER READING

For those who desire an introduction to the nature and problems of modern aesthetics, a good place to start is the books by Danto (2003), Scruton (2009), and Nehamas (2007) listed in the bibliography: all three are clear and forceful, and present very different views. For ancient art, one may consult Squire (2011). There is a useful overview of Western concepts of beauty in Prettejohn (2005), and also in the entry on “Schöne” in Ritter, Grunder, and Gabriel (1982); the part on Classical conceptions of beauty is by Glenn Most. For ancient Greek attitudes toward physical beauty, one may consult the essays in Montserrat (1998), and for the classical conception of beauty and its aftermath, Konstan 2014.

CHAPTER 25
Unity, Wholeness, and Proportion

Malcolm Heath

Plato: Appropriately Constructed Wholes

Let us begin, as is natural, at the beginning – or as close to it as our evidence allows.

Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus*, having listened to his companion reciting a speech composed (in the dialogue's fiction) by Lysias, and twice spoken in reply to it, launches a more general discussion of good and bad writing (259e). The many defects identified in Lysias' speech include random organization: it starts with what should have been said last, and the order in which points are made lacks any cogent compositional rationale (264a–b); the speech resembles an epigram whose lines could be shuffled into any order (264c–e). But "every text should be constructed like a living organism, having a kind of body of its own, so that it does not lack either head or feet, but has middle parts and extremities, composed so as to fit appropriately with each other and the whole" (264c). Socrates takes it for granted that Phaedrus would say the same; Phaedrus assents as if to a statement of the obvious, and later reproduces the formula: Sophocles and Euripides would think it ridiculous to suppose that tragedy is "anything other than the structure of those elements, appropriately constructed relative both to each other and to the whole" (268d). We cannot be certain, therefore, whether it is Plato himself or some unknown predecessor who deserves the credit for first explicitly formulating this principle. But we owe the first extant formulation to Plato.

Is this a principle of *unity*? Plato's discussion has features that will become standard components of talk of unity in the subsequent history of aesthetics: the analogy with the body of a living organism; the use of beginning, middle, and end to express the idea of parts placed in a determinate order; the effect of transposition as a test of that order. Yet Plato does not use the term "one." By contrast, the Neoplatonist commentator Hermias uses "one" and cognate words (such as "unified" and "unification') seven times in 116 words of exposition of this passage (231.2–12 Couvreur). Is its absence from Plato's text significant? He speaks instead of a whole: since a whole is one thing, this may be equally effective in conveying the point. It may, indeed, have a positive advantage: a whole has parts, as a unity need not. Elsewhere, in contexts far removed from aesthetics, Plato canvasses a variety of puzzles about the relationship of unity, wholeness, and parts (e.g. *Parm*. 137c–d, 144e–5e, 157c–8d, 159c–e; *Soph*. 244d–5b). By speaking of wholes rather

than unities in *Phaedrus* he is able to avoid these larger problems, and to focus our attention on issues relevant to the structure of texts, which are inevitably compounded out of parts.

Plato demands appropriate structure, but gives no concrete guidance on the criteria that texts must satisfy in order to conform to that principle. We are told that there should be some cogent compositional reason for the disposition of the parts; what would count as a cogent reason is not specified. Though Lysias' speech is faulted because it does not begin by defining its subject matter and organize everything that follows in relation to that starting-point (263d–e), that cannot be a sufficient condition of good writing: Socrates' first response to Lysias, which does begin with a definition (237b–8c), is subsequently repudiated (242d). Nor can it be a necessary condition of good writing applicable to every kind of discourse: *Phaedrus* itself does not begin with a definition, and Plato – author of aporetic Socratic dialogues – knew the difficulty of achieving a definition even at a discourse's conclusion. Socrates' real answer operates at a more abstract level: instead of specifying what counts as a cogent reason, he specifies what kind of expertise one would need to be able to judge what is cogent in any particular case. The structural advice given in rhetorical textbooks (266d–7d) are dismissed as merely preliminaries to the art of rhetoric (268e–9c): the art itself consists in knowing how to deploy those elements to achieve the desired effect. Invoking an analogy with medicine and bodily health, and taking the goal of discourse to be imparting virtue to the addressee's soul (270b), Socrates argues that, to be capable of judging whether any given text is appropriately composed, one must have an understanding of the nature of soul, its varieties, and how they are affected by different kinds of discourse (270c–2b). It is not surprising that Plato does not work this program out in concrete terms.

Two points are worth noting. First, the medical analogy shows that the application of Plato's principle is determined by functional considerations. Despite the long and important role that the principle has played in the history of aesthetics, therefore, it was not specifically aesthetic in its original conception. If being an appropriately constructed whole is defined in terms of functionally appropriate composition, then Plato's principle is applicable to texts of every kind. Second, the abstract and programmatic nature of Plato's formulation of his principle demands caution on the part of interpreters. Modern readers of ancient aesthetics (and of ancient literature and other arts) bring with them, as tacit assumptions if not as explicitly formulated theories, their own conceptions of what constitutes an appropriately structured or unified text or artwork. The more abstractly the principle is formulated in an ancient source, the more readily it is assimilated to our preconceptions. When an ancient source formulates criteria for appropriateness of unity in concrete terms, divergences between those criteria and those that we take for granted may be evident. In other cases, it is dangerously easy for us to project our own

conceptions back into antiquity. That is invalid, unless we suppose that compositional standards are historically and culturally invariant – which is manifestly false.

Criteria of appropriate structure were not invariant even in antiquity, as the history of interpretation of Plato's dialogues shows. The Neoplatonists developed a substantive conception of unity: a dialogue should have a single "target" (*skopos*). This means that there should be a single theme to which all of the seemingly disparate turns of the argument are ultimately subordinate. Hermias mentions a variety of opinions about the *skopos* of the *Phaedrus* (it is about love, rhetoric, the soul as motive principle, the soul as such, the good, or original beauty), but rejects them all on the grounds that they illegitimately generalize from part of the dialogue and fail to account for every element of the text (8.15–9.9, 10.26–11.19). He adopts Iamblichus' interpretation: the dialogue is about beauty in all its forms (9.9–10, 11.19–25). Were the Neoplatonists right to suppose that this was also Plato's conception? Not self-evidently: there are dialogues which apparently resist such integration, as the Neoplatonists' inability to agree on the single *skopos* of *Phaedrus* shows. Yet the single-*skopos* theory was motivated precisely by a sense that there should be more to say about the text's construction than reporting a plurality of topics assembled without any rationale. In that respect, Neoplatonist hermeneutics was entirely faithful to the spirit of the *Phaedrus*. But this was not the only way of conceiving unity available in antiquity. In rhetorically oriented criticism, understanding a text as pursuing a plurality of goals that are not subordinated to one all-embracing *skopos* was unproblematic, since an orator's selection of targets is contextually motivated. The things that an orator needs to achieve are determined by the specific situation which evokes the speech. Unity is achieved by coordinating the pursuit of what may be a diverse set of context-determined goals at the textual level, rather than subordinating them to a single over-arching theme. An anonymous teacher of rhetoric, probably of the second century AD and certainly with Platonist sympathies, analyzes Plato's *Apology* as a weaving together or mixture of four subjects: the defense of Socrates, an attack on the Athenians who put him on trial, an encomium of Socrates, and instruction on the philosophical character ([D.H.] 305.5–306.10 Usener-Radermacher). Dio Chrysostom argues that "detours" are acceptable in philosophical writing if they are about philosophically serious matters (7.127–132); philosophers, who are not subject to the time limits and procedural rules of the law courts, have no reason to curtail a discourse that has something useful to say to its audience (12.38, alluding to *Theaetetus* 172d–e). This conception is arguably more faithful than the single-*skopos* theory to the implications of Plato's medical analogy. If a patient presents with a sprained ankle and a broken arm, the doctor should not insist on treating just one of these injuries. In philosophical as in medical therapy, imposing a principle of unity that is not determined by the patient's needs would be inappropriate, and would thus violate the

principle formulated in the *Phaedrus*.

Aristotle: Bound and Bounded Unities

By contrast with Plato, Aristotle does speak of unity in connection with literary texts, and in the *Poetics* he proposes concrete criteria for assessing the unity of certain forms of poetry – tragedy, primarily, and epic. Here, then, we have an explicit concept of unity applied to what we would recognize as aesthetic issues (though Aristotle has no term that corresponds to this). But the application to aesthetics presupposes a more generally applicable analysis of the conceptual nexus linking unity, wholeness, and completeness. The main source for this analysis is *Metaphysics* 5, which aims to distinguish different ways of understanding key philosophical terms with multiple uses. The summary that follows is necessarily incomplete, since limitations of space demand a selective focus on the uses most relevant to the application in the *Poetics*.

Starting from Plato's preferred term, *whole* (*Met*. 5.26, 1023b26–4a10), we immediately encounter the connection with unity: in one of its uses, "whole" designates "what contains its contents in such a way that they are one thing" (1023b27–28). In the relevant kind of containment, wholeness makes one thing out of a plurality of constituents (1023b29–30). A whole of this kind is distinguished by continuity and boundedness (1023b32–33). However, a quantity that has a beginning, middle and end (i.e. one that is continuous and bounded) is only a whole if the parts have a determinate order, so that their position makes a difference: if the parts can be transposed indifferently, we do not speak of the "the whole …" but of "all the …" (1024a1–8). A pond, in which the circulation of water from periphery to center makes no difference to the pond as a continuous and bounded quantity of water, fails the transposition test.

Wholeness, therefore, is a kind of unity (5.26, 1023b35–36). The most relevant application of *one* (5.6, 1015b16–7a6; cf. 10.1, 1052a15–2b1) is again distinguished by continuity, but Aristotle here additionally specifies that the continuity in question requires a bond (*sundesmos*), not mere adjacency (1015b36–6a2). A bundle of planks roped together is one, but would cease to be one if the rope is cut (1016a7–9). So long as the bond that secures continuity is intact, the whole bundle moves or changes as one (1016a5–6). That is true of, for example, a leg, though its flexibility means that its parts are also capable of independent movement; the inflexible parts, such as thigh or shin, have greater unity (1016a9–12). According to another and more demanding criterion, continuity is insufficient for unity unless it binds things into a whole, with a single form (*eidos*). The components of a shoe do not constitute a unity in this strong sense if they are bound together haphazardly, but only if they have been assembled to make a shoe (1016b11–16). An

artifact is used to illustrate this point because it would not, in Aristotle's eyes, makes any sense to think of an organism's parts being assembled haphazardly: no body part retains its identity when it ceases to be a functional part of a living body (*Mete*. 4.12, 389b30–31, 390a10–13; *PA* 1.1, 640b35–1a5; *GA* 734b24–28). Such parts exist, in Aristotle's terminology, potentially (*Met*. 7.16, 1040b5–16); their unity is greater than that of parts which (like planks in a bundle) retain their identity when separated from the whole (5.26, 1023b33–4). Hence natural continuities are more continuous than artificial continuities (5.6, 1016a4), and natural wholes are more whole than artificial wholes (5.26, 1023b33–34). That explains the attraction of the living organism as an image of literary unity. Yet the image is imperfect: the wholeness of natural wholes, since it arises from an internal cause of continuity, is greater than the explicitly imposed wholeness of artificial entities (10.1, 1052a22–25).

Wholeness is also conceptually related to *completeness* (*Met*. 5.16, 1021b12–2a3; cf. *Phys*. 3.6, 207a7–15; 5.3, 227a10–17). This rests in part on a structural criterion: a thing is complete when no part of it is left out. For example, a period of time is incomplete when any part of it has not yet elapsed (1021b12–14). Wholeness, too, requires that no parts are missing (5.26, 1023b26–27). But completeness goes further, since it combines the structural criterion with one of two qualitative criteria: either it cannot be improved upon in excellence relative to the kind of thing it is, as (for example) a consummate doctor (1021b14–17); or it has reached some goal (*telos*), provided that the goal is good (1021b23–25).

A convenient transition to the specific case of poetic unity is provided by a passage which briefly recapitulates some relevant features of the general analysis (*Met*. 8.6, 1045a7–14). If something has parts, in the sense that there is a whole besides the parts (it is something of which we would say "the whole. …" rather than "all the …"), then there is some cause of its unity. A definition is not unified in the way that the *Iliad* is, because of a bond (*sundesmos*, 1045a13), but because it is a definition of one thing. Though Aristotle's concern here is with the unity of a definition, for us the contrast poses a different question: What is the bond that binds the *Iliad* into a unity?

Aristotle provides the answer in chapter 8 of *Poetics*. It is a basic premise, introduced in chapter 1, that an epic poem is an imitation (1447a13–16). The object of imitation was said to be agents in chapter 2 (1448a1–2), but chapter 6 argues that in tragedy the agents are functionally subordinate to plot (1450a15–23), and therefore to the imitation of action (6, 1450a3–4; 7, 1450b21–3). Applying this to epic, and assuming that an imitation is one if it is an imitation of one thing (8, 1451a30–31), it follows that an epic is unified if it is an imitation of one action. The bond which unifies the *Iliad* is therefore the unity of its plot. That is too familiar an idea to seem surprising: but perhaps we should be surprised. Though Aristotle has contrasted the unity of a

definition with the kind of unity possessed by the *Iliad*, there seems to be a parallel between the unity of a definition, as definition of one thing, and the unity of an imitation, as imitation of one thing. However, the parallel is not exact. The object of definition, Aristotle argues, is a unity of matter and form, which are not separable parts: they are the same thing, in potentiality and actuality respectively (*Met*. 8.6, 1045a23–33). A unitary action, by contrast, is made out of a plurality of acts (*Poet*. 8, 1451a18–19). The unity of the *Iliad* must therefore be sought one step further on: what binds many acts into a single action?

Many poets compose epics about the adventures of a hero, like Heracles or Theseus, as if performance by one person were sufficient to bind many acts into a single action (1451a16–22). Aristotle objects that there need be no necessary or probable relation between two events in a single person's life (1451a25–28). The lack of necessary or probable connection means that transposing or even eliminating any one of the component actions makes no difference to the whole (1451a32–34); but nothing is part of the whole if its presence or absence has no observable effect (1451a34–35). Such plots therefore fail the transposition test. Another possibility is rejected in chapter 23: a plot that narrates events occurring in a single period of time. Though we have seen that a period of time may be described as complete, there again need not be any necessary or probable relation between two events that occur within a complete single period (23, 1459a21–29). Epic plots should be "about a single action, whole and complete, having a beginning, middle parts, and an end" (1459a19–20). Why? "So that, like a living organism, as one whole it may effect its characteristic pleasure" (1459a20–21). It is not, of course, the function of a living organism to give pleasure, but to live its species-typical life (though someone who understands why the organism's structure in relation to that function will get pleasure from it: *PA* 1.5, 645a7–10). But giving a certain kind of pleasure is part of an epic's function, and appropriate structure is as important to fulfilling that function as it is to a living organism's capacity to feed or reproduce.

Aristotle holds that the same basic criterion of unity applies to both epic and tragedy (23, 1459a17–19). So his treatment of epic plots in chapters 8 and 23 rests on the groundwork done in chapter 7, where Aristotle unpacks a phrase from the definition of tragedy: "imitation of a complete action having magnitude" (6, 1449b24–25). "Complete" is expanded to "complete and whole" (7, 1450b23–25); "whole," in turn, is used to gloss "one" (1451a1–2; 8, 1451a32). "Whole" is specified as having beginning, middle, and end (7, 1450b26–27), and these are defined in terms that entail continuity and closure: there is a necessary or probable connection between beginning and middle, and between middle and end; but there is nothing that necessarily or probably follows the end, nor anything that necessarily precedes the beginning (1450b27–31). The question of how this kind of causal closure is possible

would take us too far from our present topic. Here we need merely observe that necessary or probable connection provides the bonded continuity (not mere adjacency) demanded of wholes in *Met*. 5.26 (1023b32–33), and closure the boundedness.

What of the action's magnitude? An organism or anything else that is composed of parts must have those parts in a certain order if it is to be beautiful (*kalon*), but it must also be the right size (*Poet*. 7, 1450b34–37). It is not immediately obvious that this recommendation has any specific bearing on unity: *kalon* is the most general term to commend aesthetic excellence (as well as excellence in ethics and other spheres). But unity is a precondition of excellence, and human perceptual capacities set limits to the magnitude of what can be *perceived* as a unity. If something exceeds the upper limit, so that observers cannot take it in, "the one and the whole" eludes them; beneath the lower limit, the time taken for observation is below the threshold of perceptibility (1450b37–1a3). A physical object or organism, therefore, must afford easy synoptic viewing (*eusunopton*) if it is to be aesthetically excellent; something that unfolds over time, like the plot of a narrative, must be easily held in memory (1451a3–6).

It is important to recognize that Aristotle is, at this point, concerned with the structure of the plot, as distinct from the structure of the text. That is not say that Aristotle has no interest in text structure: he applies the transposition test to parts of a text when he deprecates choral songs in tragedy that are interludes with no more connection to one play than to any other (18, 1456a27–32). But plot and text are not identical: for example, parts of a tragedy's plot may fall outside the boundaries of the play, occurring chronologically prior to the play's first scene, or later than the final scene (18, 1455b24–32; cf. 15, 1454b2–8). Since epics and tragedies are unified by virtue of their unity of action, Aristotle's primary concern in the *Poetics* is with plot structure. His focus of interest is therefore not the same as Plato's, whose comments in the *Phaedrus* are concerned with the organization of texts. We must therefore be cautious in drawing inferences about Aristotle's criteria at the textual level; they cannot be extrapolated from plot-level criteria.

In this respect, Aristotle's approach to epic and tragic unity resembles that of the Neoplatonist approach to the unity of Platonic dialogues. Each theory situates unity in something that must be abstracted from the text: an abstracted structure of events and an abstracted theme respectively. Should we conclude that Aristotle's theory is driven by philosophically motivated preconceptions to an extent that makes it unrepresentative of the expectations which his contemporaries would have brought to tragedies or epics? We know that epics and plays that did not meet Aristotle's criteria found an audience (he provides some of the evidence for that himself). Perhaps, then, contemporary literary taste was more aligned to the rhetorical approach described earlier: it was

willing to recognize unity in coordination at the level of text, and did not demand subordination to a single abstract source of unity. But Aristotle's theory is faithful to contemporary taste in one respect, at least: it is able to explain the universally acknowledged superiority of Homer's epics. Second, he does not impose his conceptual analyses arbitrarily: he has a respect for generic diversity, and he applies his concepts in a correspondingly flexible way. Third, although plot is "as it were the soul of tragedy" (6, 1450a38), the Aristotelian soul is not separable from a body (e.g. *DA* 2.1, 413a3–4): we shall see in due course that the abstraction of plot is qualified when account is taken of the interactions between the plot and the text which embodies the plot for the audience.

Aristotle takes it for granted that tragedies and epics are designed to affect audiences in certain ways, and therefore recognizes that the application of criteria for poetic structure must take account of the receptive capacities of an audience. This audience relativity has already been observed in the limits to the magnitude of plot imposed by the upper and lower boundaries of unitary human perception. But this is not an isolated case. Aristotle is willing to endorse a variety of techniques by which poets manipulate audience perceptions by controlling the salience of elements in the plot (9, 1452a3–11; 15, 1454b6–8; 16, 1455a12–16; 24, 1460a11–b5; 25, 1460b35–61a1, 1461b11–12). The transposition test, too, is subject to a qualification that reflects Aristotle's sensitivity to what will or will not be salient to an audience: something is not part of the whole if its presence or absence has no *observable* (*epidēlon*) effect (8, 1451a34–35).

But the limits of perceptible magnitude have so far been stated only in the broadest terms: more precise guidance is needed if we are to have any realistic conception of the scale appropriate to a tragedy. Aristotle suggests a criterion determined by the nature of a complete tragic action: "the magnitude in which a series of events occurring sequentially in accordance with probability or necessity gives rise to a change from good fortune to bad fortune, or from bad fortune to good fortune" (7, 1451a12–14). This, though not particularly precise, makes obvious sense. But the more general principle that precedes it is problematic: "always, the greater (up to the limits of synoptic viewing), the more beautiful [*kalon*] it is with respect to magnitude" (1451a10–11). It seems to follow that a person of large stature will be more beautiful than someone smaller – which Aristotle does, in fact, maintain (*NE* 4.3, 1123b6–8). But for each species, there is a certain range within which size varies (*GA* 4.4, 771b33–2a2): so a human as large as an elephant would not be beautiful. The general principle must similarly be relativized to different genres; if it were not, it would entail that tragedians should expand their plots to epic scale – which Aristotle denies. The relativity of norms to genre is consistent with the conceptual analyses discussed earlier. Of the two qualitative criteria of completeness, one relates to achieving some good goal; the other relates to

excellence within a certain kind (*Met*. 5.16, 1021b14–17, 23–25). Epic and tragedy have, in key respects, the same goal (*Poet*. 6, 1449b16–20; 26, 1462b12–15); but Aristotle has acknowledged a difference in length between epic and tragedy (5, 1449b11–16; cf. 24, 1459b17–18), and in chapter 26 he will argue that tragic brevity is superior to epic expansiveness. There must, then, be considerations which block the inference from "the greater … the more beautiful" to the superiority of the more expansive genre. The key to tragedy's superiority is that, even within the limits of synoptic viewing which preserve perceptible unity, differences in magnitude relate to different degrees of unity.

This point is made most explicitly when Aristotle takes up the challenge of those who claim that epic is intrinsically superior to tragedy. One of his arguments against this view rests on unity: "the epic poets' imitation is less unified" (26, 1462b3–4). Evidence for this claim is parenthetically inserted: many tragedies could be made from one epic; if epic poets use a single *muthos* (i.e. the material for a single tragedy) the result gives an appearance of being either truncated, if the epic is not developed to the length appropriate to it, or else diluted, if it stretches its material out to epic length (1462b4–7). Returning from this parenthesis Aristotle explains his claim that imitation is less unified in epic: an epic comprises a plurality of actions, in the way that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* contain many parts, each of which have magnitude in their own right. Yet the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are, to the highest degree, an imitation of a single action (1462b7–11). So even the most excellent epics are less unified than a comparably excellent tragedy.

We should not be puzzled that Homer's poems comprise a plurality of actions, and yet are imitations of a single action: we have already seen that the unity of an epic depends on binding multiple acts into a single action. It would be a merely terminological variation to speak of the binding of multiple plots into a single plot: so we should also not be puzzled when Aristotle mentions "the whole plot [*muthos*] of the *Iliad*" to illustrate an "epic-making structure," by which he means a structure "with many plots" (*polumuthos*) (18, 1456a11–13). His point is that it is wrong to make a tragedy out of an "epic-making structure" (1456a10–11). An epic poem has sufficient length to give appropriate magnitude to each of its parts; by implication, tragedies that try to deal with all the material of an epic are forced to compress each part into too small a compass to have any effect, and consequently fail (1456a13–17).

The *Iliad*, then, has an "epic-making structure" from which one should not try to make a tragedy. Yet Aristotle also says that, unlike other epics, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have the material for only one or two tragedies (23, 1459b2–5). The distinction between plot and text may help to resolve the apparent contradiction: the *text* of a narrative might provide material for many tragedies, though its *plot* provides material for just one. The importance of that distinction is illustrated by Homer's unique approach to epic structure.

Epic poets who have avoided the mistake of composing plots based on a single person or a single period of time, which as we have seen are flawed in principle, have for the most part based their epics on "a single action of many parts" (23, 1459a37–b2). That description would apply to the story of the Trojan War as a whole, which Aristotle recognizes as satisfying his criteria for a bounded whole (1459a31–32). But if Homer had followed that model in the *Iliad* he would have faced a dilemma: either the plot would be too large, and could not be viewed synoptically; or, if it was moderate in magnitude, it would have been "over-complicated in its variety" (1459a31–35). Though Aristotle speaks here (as in chapter 7) of the magnitude of the *plot*, his thought-experiment assumes the same plot (the whole Trojan War) narrated more or less expansively. The variable is therefore the length of the *text* in which the plot is narrated. It may therefore seem that he is getting the level of text and plot confused. But the relativity of appropriate magnitude to the receptive capacities of the audience points to an explanation; it is psychologically plausible that the possibility of grasping a plot and retaining it in memory is dependent not only on the magnitude of the plot taken abstractly, but also on the length of the text which delivers it to the audience.

Homer's solution was to select a single part from the story of the whole war. We could say that a single action of many parts is like a bundle of planks: the planks have actual existence both within the bundle and when separated from it. By selecting just one part from such a story, Homer achieved a single action of which the parts have only potential existence, which (as we saw earlier) is more of a whole. But there is a paradox. The length which Aristotle recommends for synoptic boundedness is equivalent to three tragedies – approximately 4000 lines (24, 1459b17–22). The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are much longer than this. Such expansiveness at the level of text is consistent with plot-level concentration if the expansions, though related to the core plot, are not parts of it. Think, for example, of the many minor combats in Homer's battle narratives. Though these actions contribute to the richness of the narrative text, their absence would not make a difference to the plot in the way that (for example) the absence of the Quarrel would; for this reason, their presence places no additional demand on the audience's ability to keep the plot in memory. Aristotle speaks (with characteristic compression) of Homer taking one part of the Trojan War story and using "many of them" (i.e. many other parts of that larger story) as "episodes" to interrupt the narrative (23, 1459a35–37). His example is the Catalogue of Ships, a passage transported from its natural place at the start of the war and adapted to accompany the first deployment of the army in the *Iliad*: its removal would impoverish the poem as text, but not damage the causal integrity of the plot. The *Odyssey*, too, has a core plot that can be stated very briefly, but has been expanded at the textual level by means of episodes (17, 1455b15–23).

Epic is able to use contrasting episodes to provide variety for the audience:

this gives it an advantage over tragedy, which can fail because "similarity soon satiates" (24, 1459b28–31). Here, too, Aristotle is sensitive to what is appropriate in relation to an audience's receptive capacities. The need for variety and change is a deficiency, but it is a deficiency that is part of human nature, and must be taken into account (*NE* 7.14, 1154b20–31). Yet Aristotle, always alert to the interaction of multiple factors, also sees it as an advantage of tragedy over epic that it achieves its goal at less length: "what is more concentrated is more pleasant than what is watered down by being extended in time" (*Poet*. 26, 1462a18–b3). How might the respective advantages of expansion and concentration be weighed against each other? Compare an epic of the length that Aristotle recommends with a standard set of three tragedies. The tragedies have the potential to give us three instances of a more concentrated, and therefore more intensely pleasing, experience, but with the risk that the audience will be dissatisfied by the repetition; the epic has more resources to avoid tedium by diversification, but cannot achieve such an intense effect. Tragedy has greater potential than epic, therefore, but also a greater risk of failure.

One final point: there are limits to the superiority of greater unity. It is possible for something to be *too* unified. A degree of unity that prevents something achieving its proper goal is a defect. This is a criticism that Aristotle makes of the hypothetical city of Plato's *Republic* (*Pol*. 2.2, 1261a13–22, 6–15; 2.5, 1263b5–14). Being more unified is part of the superiority of tragedy over epic; but an epic which achieved tragic unity would be as defective as a tragedy which achieved epic diversity.

"Everyone, so to speak": Proportion

Aristotle's requirement that a plot should have continuity, closure, and right magnitude depends on a general principle that excellence (or beauty: *to kalon*) consists in magnitude and order (*Poet*. 7, 1450b36–37). Elsewhere, in a mathematical context, he separates the two aspects of structure, and varies the terminology for magnitude: the basic elements of excellence are order, proportion (*summetria*), and boundedness (*Met*. 13.3, 1078a31–b6). The fact that mathematical entities do not have physical bulk may be part of the reason for replacing substituting *summetria* for magnitude, but it is also important that *summetria* expresses a relationship between two or more things. *Summetria* is not primarily "symmetry" in the modern English sense. It can designate commensurability, but also proportionality, balance, or "fit" across a very wide range of applications. Giving way to fear in the face of terrors beyond human endurance is not cowardice: the virtue of courage is limited to dangers that are proportionate (*summetra*) to the human capacity to withstand them (*EE* 3.1, 1229b13–21). Physical health is, or depends on, *summetria* of physiological qualities (*APo*. 1.13, 78b19–20; *Top*. 6.2, 139b20–21; 6.6, 145b7–11), internally or in relation to the external environment (*Phys*. 7.3,

246b3–6). Poor physique can be expressed as a lack of *summetria* (*Poet*. 25, 1461a12–13). Here, obviously, the proportionality is of the individual's parts to each other: so physical beauty is, or depends on, *summetria* of the limbs (*Top*. 3.1, 116b21–22; *Phys*. 7.3, 246b7–8). But *summetria* is not sufficient for beauty: small people can be *summetroi*, but not beautiful (*NE* 4.3, 1123b6–8). Magnitude is still important.

In the collection of *Problems* transmitted among Aristotle's works, an unknown Aristotelian raises the question why someone who lacks physical *summetria* seems bigger when seen in company than when he is on his own, and suggests that this is a perceptual illusion explained by the fact that *summetria* is a source of unity (*Prob*. 17.1, 915b38–6a11). If someone is *summetros*, "the observation is one": we might say, recalling *Poetics* 7, that he is easy to view synoptically. The opposite is true of the person who lacks *summetria*. Seen in company, then, the person who lacks *summetria*, and so takes more time to grasp perceptually, appears larger.

These were not new ideas. In the *Timaeus* (87c–e) Plato argues that everything good is beautiful (*kalon*), and beauty does not lack measure (is not *ametron*). Taking it as an acknowledged fact that *summetria* in a body gives it health, beauty, and ease of movement, and that the same applies to the soul, he insists that there must also be a *summetria* between body and soul. In the *Philebus*, having established that a good human life requires a mixture of factors (61a–b), Socrates argues (64c–5a) that the integrity of any compound depends on measure (*metron*) and proportion (*summetria*); since these are the nature of beauty, it follows that the good has "taken refuge" in beauty: so the good must be "hunted out" in beauty, proportion, and truth (truth having already been added to the "mixture" at 61e–2a). This triad constitutes the unitary source of goodness in any compound. In the *Sophist* (235c–6d), *summetria* is used to distinguish different kinds of imitation: one preserves the true *summetria* of a beautiful object, while the other produces *summetria* that is not genuinely but only apparently beautiful. Plato here alludes to statues in which the proportions of have been manipulated to ensure that they appear correctly from an observer's point of view. His disparagement of this illusionistic technique highlights the significance of Aristotle's relativization of his criteria to the capacities of human observers.

The idea that health and beauty, both of body and of soul, involve *summetria* was taken up by Stoics (e.g. *SVF* III 278 = Stobaeus II 62.15–63.5 Wachsmuth; 279 = Cic. *Tusc*. 4.32). Chrysippus assented to this doctrine, as we know from Galen's critique (*De placitis* 5.2.32–3 = *SVF* III 471). But the doctrine was by no means distinctively Stoic: Galen accepts it, cites Plato in its support, and attacks Chrysippus only for his confused and inconsistent application of it (5.2.34, 48; 5.3.12–23; cf. e.g. *Thrasybulus* 5.822.6–9 Kühn). Platonists were, not surprisingly, enthusiasts for *summetria*. Plutarch, giving advice on correct deportment when listening to lectures, appeals to the

principle that “in everything, beauty is realised through multiple factors, so to speak, being brought together at a single point by a kind of proportion and harmony” (*Mor*. 45c–d). The *Philebus* triad was influential. A second-century handbook of Platonism includes truth, *summetria*, and beauty among the attributes of God (Alcinous *Did*. 10.3). In the fifth century, Proclus’ *Platonic Theology* identifies unity as the distinctive contribution of *summetria* to any compound or mixture (3.11; cf. 3.13, 48.11–25; 3.18, 62.11–63.21 Saffrey-Westerink). According to Plotinus, “everyone, so to speak” says that “proportion of the parts to each other and the whole, with the addition of good colouring, produces visible beauty, and for them [i.e. visible objects] and in general for everything else being beautiful is their being proportioned and measured” (1.6.1.20–25). Plotinus himself, however, is a dissenting voice.

Plotinus: Form

In view of the precedent set by Plato, one might be surprised to find Plotinus launching an attack on the theory of beauty as *summetria* (1.6). It is not that he repudiates the Phileban triad: it is explicitly cited and endorsed elsewhere in his works (6.7.30.32–39). The critique has been interpreted as opportunistic anti-Stoic polemic: but, as we have seen, this conception of beauty was far more widely disseminated. His critique of the theory would, in any case, be defective as an attempt to refute a rival philosophical theory. It is better understood as probing a widely accepted commonplace in order to prime our sense of the range of problems that an adequate theory of beauty needs to address. The constructive sequel is designed to persuade us that these problems can only be addressed adequately in the context of a Platonist metaphysics; that metaphysics also explains the element of truth in the *summetria* theory.

The questions which Plotinus poses to the theory (1.6.1.25–54) start from its making explicit reference only to composite entities. But, first, if parts are not beautiful except in relation to a whole, beautiful wholes will consist of parts that are not beautiful. Second, nothing that is not composite can be beautiful: it will make no sense to talk of a color, or sunlight, or lightning, or a single tone as beautiful. Third, a face may appear beautiful at one time, and not another, though its proportions have not changed. If, fourth, the theory is extended beyond the realm of perception, it is unclear how we are to measure proportionality in such things as lifestyles, laws, learning, or bodies of knowledge. Consistency is not enough: the conjunction of two morally repellent falsehoods is not beautiful, though its elements are consonant with each other. By what other kind of ratio would we determine proportionality between the parts of a soul, or its thoughts? What would become of the beauty of intellect, itself alone?

From the outset, Plotinus makes no secret of his Platonist perspective. He

opens his discussion by reminding us of the diversity of things to which the word *kalos* is applied: there is visible beauty, beauty in sound, beauty in lifestyles, actions, characters, bodies of knowledge, and in virtue (1.6.1.1–6). The agenda he sets is characteristically Platonist: is there some *one thing* by which all beautiful things are beautiful? Some things, such as the nature of virtue, are beautiful in themselves, but physical objects are not, and must be beautiful by "participation" in something other than themselves (1.6.1.7–16). Clearly, Plotinus is directing our thoughts toward Platonic Forms: and after the preliminary survey of the issues it is to Form that Plotinus turns – not, of course, form in the sense of outward shape or structure, but Form in the sense of the fundamental reality that is the cause of a thing's being what it is.

The constructive phase begins from the experience of encountering beauty. Our response is explained as an instance of Platonic recollection: the encounter with beauty in the world of experience triggers a recollection of the soul's acquaintance with intelligible reality (1.6.2.2–11). Things in the world of experience are related to intelligible reality through participation in Form: "how are those [intelligible] and these [experienced] things both beautiful? We say: it is by participation in Form that these are" (1.6.2.11–13; cf. 5.8.1–2). In the case of composite entities, it is Form that brings one thing to be out of many parts, bringing them into a unified completion (*sunteleia*), and making them one thing by agreement (*homologia*); since Form is itself unitary, that which it forms must also be unified, so far as that is possible for what comes to be out of many (1.6.2.13–22; cf. 2.9.17.15–21; 5.8.1.26–27). When something has been unified in this way, beauty resides in it and gives itself to the parts as well as the whole (1.6.2.22–24). Beauty is thus a top-down, not a bottom-up, phenomenon: so the problem of a beautiful whole composed from parts that are not beautiful dissolves (cf. 6.7.22.26–36). Equally, since this theory does not explain beauty exclusively in terms of a relationship between parts, the beauty of non-composites causes it no embarrassment (1.6.2.24–28). Where there are parts to relate, as in a body, it is their unification that is the source of health and beauty (cf. 6.9.1.14–16); but unity, and therefore beauty, also belong to non-composites.

Plotinus refrains from speaking of *summetria* in the case of composites, but he could have done so: he does speak of "agreement" (*homologia*, 1.6.2.20), which is used elsewhere in free variation with *summetria* (1.2.1.43–48). If virtue can be spoken of as "unification into one thing and one *homologia*" (6.9.1.16–17), then why should one not also speak of it as *summetria*? Whichever word one uses, it is the unity that is decisive: and the unity derives from Form. Perhaps, then, Plotinus' thought is not that speaking of *summetria* would be wrong, but that the word is too limited (if it is taken to specify a relation between parts), or at best misleading (since its use in the commonplace formula has laden it with the implication of a relation between parts). This makes it preferable to use terms, like consonance (*sumphōnia*) or

harmonization (*sunharmonia*) (1.6.2.4–6; 1.6.3.3–16), which apply more comfortably to the fundamental relationship between the beautiful thing and Form, or between the soul and the Form which it recognizes in the beautiful thing. What is decisive is not the consonance of parts, but the Form-dependent consonance and harmonization of a beautiful object with soul, which makes the object dear to the soul, "just as a good man finds congenial [*prosēnes*] an apparent trace of virtue in a young person, consonant with his own inner truth" (1.6.3.15–16). Hence the problem of consonant falsehoods is solved, too. Things are not vicious, ugly, or false by participation in Form, but to the extent that they fail to participate in Form. So the conjunction of two morally repellent falsehoods cannot be beautiful if beauty derives from Form.

We do not have space to pursue Plotinus' discussion further and consider beauty in the soul (1.6.4–6; cf. 5.8.2–3), beyond mentioning briefly another reason for his preference not to speak of beauty as *summetria*. Making our inner self beautiful involves a purification that detaches us from the body. In turning away from the body, the soul "becomes Form" (1.6.6.13–14). To the extent that the soul achieves this purification, therefore, it has transcended measure (*metron*) (1.6.9.15–22; cf. 1.2.1.42–50; 6.7.32.34–39). Where lack of due measure (*ametria*: cf. Pl. *Tim*. 87c) is impossible, *summetria* too ceases to be relevant.

But our concern here is with beauty in the perceptible world: let us return finally to that. Basil of Caesarea, commenting on "God saw the light, that it was beautiful [*kalon*]" in his sermons on the six days of creation (2.7), alludes to the conception of physical beauty as *summetria* of the parts to each other with good coloring, and asks how this can apply to light. Mention of gold as a parallel case reinforces suspicion of an allusion to Plotinus. Basil suggests that the *summetria* is not between the parts, but in the congenial (*prosēnes*: cf. Plotinus 1.6.3.15) relationship to vision. Plato explains *color* as an outflow from objects with particles proportionate to sight (*Tim*. 67c); Basil's relativization of the beauty of *light* to species-typical perceptual capacities is a move reminiscent of Aristotle. Plotinus would surely ask what explains the congenial relationship, and would lead us back from perception to intelligible Form. Form is not itself composite, but can manifest itself in plurality: its binding force is what makes it possible for perception to gather together what is dispersed and take it in as something without parts (1.6.3.9–15). Those sympathetic to Aristotle's claim that Plato's Forms are "empty verbiage and poetic metaphors" (*Met*. 1.9, 991a20–22) might retort that this explains nothing. Aristotle's approach, by contrast, shows how criteria for assessing the unity of particular kinds of text can be defended by arguments grounded in experience, and thereby opens up the possibility of a reciprocal process in which texts are evaluated against criteria which can in turn be assessed against the evidence of the texts. If the criteria seem to work, explanations can be sought in empirically determinable human capacities and motivations, in the

spirit of Aristotle's account of the reasons why producing and consuming poetry is a natural human behavior (*Poet*. 4, 1448b4–24). This approach might provoke worries in turn. Is it possible to disentangle human universals from cultural and individual variables? Why should universals be privileged? Can norms be validly derived from empirical observation? Aristotle would not be lost for answers: the answers would lead into further debate.

After a beginning and a middle, it may seem disappointing to be left only with loose ends. But unanswered questions are good starting points for philosophical reflection.

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FURTHER READING

Heath (1989) contains a wide-ranging survey of conceptions of literary unity in ancient philosophy, rhetoric, and literary scholarship: I have since modified my views on many details (as here, especially, on Aristotle), and do not find the way the book frames its question entirely helpful. Aspects of Aristotle's theory are discussed in Belfiore (2001), Frede (2009), and Roberts (1992). Tracy (1969) is useful on the origins of the concept *summetria*; Horn (1989) examines its Stoic and subsequent history. O'Meara (1993), an unusually accessible introduction to Plotinus, includes a short but valuable discussion of his theory of beauty (88–99); Anton (1964) shows why Plotinus' critique of *summetria* theory is defective as a refutation. Later Neoplatonist views on the unity of Plato's dialogues are discussed in Coulter (1976).

CHAPTER 26
The Sublime

James I. Porter

Testing the Limits of an Idea

The sublime, defined in modernity as a certain *je ne sais quoi* that utterly transforms whatever it touches (Boileau), is an elusive entity in any context. How can we tell when the idea of sublimity is being discussed in antiquity? Take the following four passages as a kind of blindfold test:

1. **Euripides** works extremely hard at making these two emotions tragic, madness and love … Though being anything but grand in nature [*megalophuēs*], on many occasions he nevertheless forces his own nature to become tragic. And in each case where grandeur is concerned, he (as Homer says) "lashes his own ribs with his tail and the flanks on both sides | as he rouses himself to fury for the fight, eyes glaring" [*Il*. 20.170–171; trans. Lattimore]. Thus, when Helios gives the reins to Phaethon he says, "'Drive neither entering the heaven above Libya […],'" and then he adds: "'steer and hold a course for the seven Pleiades.' […] The boy seized the reins; he struck the flanks of the chariot's winged horses and set them going, and the mares flew to heaven's folds. Behind him his father mounted Sirius and rode, advising the boy: 'Drive over there! Turn the chariot this way, this way!'" [Eur. *Phaeth.*, *TrGF* 779; trans. Collard and Cropp]. Shouldn't we say that the soul of the writer has also mounted the chariot and is sharing in the dangers of the horses as he takes wing with them? If his soul weren't born aloft among the heavenly bodies and following their paths, he would never have imagined such scenes.

2. I have often thought, Alexander, that philosophy is a divine and really god-like activity [*theion ti kai daimonion ontōs chrēma*], particularly in those instances when it alone has exalted itself [*diarmenē*] to the contemplation of the universe and sought to discover the truth that is in it; the other sciences shunned this field of inquiry because of its sublimity and grandeur [*dia to hupsos kai to megethos*]; philosophy has not feared the task or thought itself unworthy of the noblest things but has judged that the study of these is by nature most closely related to it and most fitting.

3. The Poet displays how great the speed of the heavens' course is through the following [verses]:

As far as into the hazing distance a man can see with his eyes,
who sits in his eyrie gazing on the wine-blue water,
as far as this is the stride of the gods' proud neighing horses.

[*Il.* 5.770–772; trans. Lattimore]

This may well be expressed in an extraordinary way [*megalophuōs*], and with marvelous expansiveness [*kata thaumastēn auxēsin*]. [And it was so conceived] by a poet who not only is content to use sight stretched to its limits to indicate the speed involved in the rapid movement of the heavens, but who also adds height [*hupsos*] [of the promontory look-out] to [that sight-line] along with the [depth of the] sea below. Yet even this description falls short of properly indicating the swiftness of the heavens. Seeing how the speed that the heavens employ in their rapid movement *has no limit, and no notion of it can be formed*, surely it is stupid to believe that a part of them that is 1 foot wide [viz., the sun, according to Epicurus] could rise in such an interval [*diastēma*] of time?

4. Double words and frequent epithets and unfamiliar words best suit one speaking passionately; for it is excusable that an angry person calls a wrong "heaven-high" [*ouranomēkes*] or "monstrous" [*pelōrion*]. And [this can be done] when a speaker holds the audience in his control and works them into a fit of enthusiasm [*poiēsēi enthousiasai*] either by praise or blame or hate or love, as Isocrates does, among others, at the end of the *Panegyricus*.… Those who are in a state of enthusiasm make such utterances, and audiences clearly accept them because they are in a similar mood. That is why [this emotional style] is suited to poetry too, for poetry is inspired [*entheon*]. It should be used as described – or with irony, as Gorgias did and as in the *Phaedrus*.

Text 1 comes from Longinus' essay *On the Sublime* 15.3–4 (mid-first century AD or third century AD, with the earlier date most widely favored). Texts 2 and 3 come from works with only uncertain dates (guesses range from the mid-fourth century BC to the mid-first century AD in the case of the first and from 50 BC to AD 250 for the second), though they stem from a tradition of speculation on the heavens that reaches back to the Presocratics. Text 4 occurs in a treatise on rhetoric from the fourth century BC. Despite their disparate origins, they all share a number of features, many of which indicate a common genealogy and a shared set of assumptions: the terminology of elevation, the shows of extraordinary, exalted emotion, and the appeals to the heavens, to physical grandeur, and to the gods. Moreover, the last three texts describe sublimity in a way that Longinus would have recognized in his treatise *On the Sublime*. They not only use terminology familiar to Longinus, but they also apply it to the very same kinds of objects as are capable, in his mind, of inspiring sublimity in us (the universe, Homer, impassioned

moments of rhetoric). Given these proximities, we are entitled to ask whether in texts 2 to 4 we possibly have three instances of a pre-Longinian sublime and, in all four texts, specimens of a multiform sublime tradition. But before getting carried away by such a prospect, we need to acknowledge one more feature that the last three texts have in common: none of them would be allowed, or has ever been allowed, into the canon of writings on the sublime in the current scholarly consensus about Longinus and sublimity.

According to the current view of the sublime, which emerged during the 1950s and 1960s, each of these texts would be disqualified from the tradition of the sublime for several reasons. On this view, the sublime has no prehistory prior to the latter half of the first century BC when its concept was first conceived and named by Caecilius of Caleacte, Longinus' sole predecessor (Russell 1964, xxxi); it cannot be found outside of literary contexts (ibid. xxxvii–xxxviii); it cannot be found except where the word *hupsos* (or *sublimitas*) is explicitly used in its technical, literary-critical sense (Roberts 1902, 292; Costil 1949, 445 and *passim*; Russell 1964, xxxi–xxxii; Chiron 2001, 330), nor can synonyms or equivalents of *hupsos* replace the word itself; not even *hupsēlos*, the adjectival form of *hupsos*, is proof of the concept's presence (Heath 1999, 66). Moreover, on this view sublimity is not equivalent to grandeur; it is not linked in any way to the inherited rhetorical system of styles, because it transcends these (Grube 1957a, xi; 1957b, 356): *hupsos* is "a special effect, not a special style" (Russell 1964, xxxvii, citing as evidence Boileau-Despréaux 1966 (1674; 1701), 338; repeated verbatim in Richardson 1986, 398; Mazzucchi 1992, xv; Innes 2002, 275; the language originates with Monk 1935, 5–35). Ultimately, given their indelible moral and social connotations, the sublime barely belongs in the vocabulary of ancient literary criticism: "*hupsos* and its cognates are never entirely at home in literary criticism" (Russell 1964, xxx). They are forever pointing to some other, remotely distant spiritual home, one that transcends literature altogether, and in a way that would be recognizable to a Boileau or a later Romantic but not to an Aristotle, Theophrastus, or the author of *On Style*, let alone to a writer on nature.

It is easy to see why assumptions like these would preclude treating the three last texts above as instances of engagements with sublimity, but also why the very idea of the sublime, so conceived, flirts with anachronism and risks belonging to no one but Longinus in antiquity, so *sui generis* is its definition. Texts 2 and 3, deriving as they do from treatises on the nature of the universe and the heavens, would be excluded on generic grounds alone. The fourth comes too early chronologically for the idea of sublimity to have been available to its author, and besides there is irrefragable proof that the idea was not available to him: the author does not know the word *hupsos* as a term of art.

But this is all very strange. Taken out of context, text 4 might easily pass for

an extract from *On the Sublime* (whose author can go on for paragraphs and even pages at a time without using the *h*-word, as he does in the text quoted above). Text 4 is in fact from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, book 3, on style (3.7.1408b10–20; trans. Kennedy, slightly adapted). And while Aristotle does not link the effects he names to a single style, he is developing something like a poetically enhanced rhetorical style, one that is elevated, overpowering, and effective beyond the limits of rational persuasion (see Walker, in this volume). Extreme *pathos*, *enthousiasmos*, *ekstasis* (cf. ibid., 3.8.1408b35–36), divine inspiration, complete subjugation of the hearer – all the ingredients of a Longinian experience are available right here (cf. Quadlbauer 1958, 62–64). There are strong hints that Aristotle is theorizing out of character and in a sophistic manner. His possible sources are easily imagined: Gorgias springs to mind (he is named, after all); Plato's *Ion* is another possible influence, even more so than the work Aristotle names, the *Phaedrus*, as is the *Menexenus* (234c–35c); Democritus may be lurking somewhere farther in the background (Wehrli 1946, 11–12); but above all, one suspects that a general smattering of these and similar influences as received through more pragmatically minded rhetorical manuals are the likeliest culprit, given the other nefarious touches in Aristotle's depiction of the speaker's bag of tricks. True, Aristotle is innocent of the critical term *hupsos*. But he has all the other prerequisites one could ever hope to have in order to establish the presence of sublimity. Perhaps the term is not as all-important as it has been made out to be, and Aristotle and his predecessors should be taken as forerunners of Longinus after all.

The presence of a "Longinian" moment in Aristotle may be surprising taken by itself. But it needn't be so on a redrawn map of ancient rhetoric in which the sublime no longer marks a sudden intrusion onto the critical landscape during the Augustan era, but is instead one of rhetoric's abiding features. Aristotle provides us with brief glimpses of predecessors to his adoptive stance in the *Rhetoric*. Looking ahead, Theophrastean echoes can be overheard as well: after all, the lofty goal of the orator according to Theophrastus is "to delight and amaze [*ekplēxai*] the hearer and to force him into a state of conviction," fr. 78 Fortenbaugh), which a speaker achieves by directing all his attention "to the listeners" (as opposed to the subject matter) and to the *semnotēs*, *megaloprepeia*, and *sublimitas* of his language (frr. 78, 691, 688, 707).

Aristotle's account of exalted rhetoric further anticipates Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who compares his experience of reading Demosthenes to transcendent rapture:

> Whenever I read a speech of Isocrates … I become serious and feel a great tranquility of mind, like those listening to libation-music played on reed-pipes or to Dorian or enharmonic melodies. But when I pick up one of Demosthenes' speeches, I am transported [*enthousiō*]: I am led [*agomai*] hither and thither, feeling one emotion after another – disbelief, anguish,

> terror, contempt, hatred, pity, goodwill, anger, envy – every emotion in turn that can sway the human mind. I feel exactly the same as those who take part in the Corybantic dances and the rites of Cybele the Mother-Goddess … And I have often wondered what on earth those men who actually heard him make these speeches could have felt … If, then, the spirit [*pneuma*] with which Demosthenes' pages are still imbued after so many years possesses so much power and moves his readers in this way, surely to hear him delivering his speeches at the time must have been an extraordinary [*huperphues*] and overwhelming [*deinon*] experience.
>
> (*Dem*. 22.176.15–178.2; trans. Usher)

Dionysius' reactions are virtually *predicted* by Aristotle's account. We should note that Dionysius does not use the term *hupsos* in this passage, though he does use several equivalents (like *huperphuēs* and *deinos*), while the whole is undeniably comparable to Longinus' accounts of ecstasy in 1.3–4 and in other parts of *On the Sublime* (cf. *Subl*. 8.4; 13.2; cf. 33.5: *daimonion pneuma*; cf. de Jonge 2012). Elsewhere, Dionysus confers the label of *hupsos* on the writing of Demosthenes and other Classical writers (Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Plato). If *hupsos* is not the most prevalent term in Dionysius' arsenal (and it is not), the reason may be put down to fashion, choice, or happenstance. But whatever the reason, it is plain that most of the literature discussed by Dionysius, from Homer to Pindar and the tragedians to Plato and the orators (with the exception of Lysias), is felt by him to be of the highest form of excellence, and by his time canonically and incomparably "classical" (in modern parlance), which is to say (in ancient parlance) sublime (cf. Porter 2006; Hunter 2009). And for the same reason it is plain that Dionysius is a critic in a sublime tradition that he does not produce but merely *inherits*.

Dionysius has a surfeit of descriptors available to him to account for sublimity: *ogkos*, *semnos*, *megaloprepeia*, *deinos*, *tonos*, *perittos*, *axiōmatikos*, *austēros*, etc. To deny him the concept is a lot like saying that sublimity would be unthinkable for us unless the word *sublime* – the noun, not the adjective – were in circulation in English. Longinus likewise resorts to this much wider field of vocabulary beyond *hupsos* or *ta hupsē* or *ta hupsēla* to designate sublimity. He has over 70 ways to name *hupsos* in his treatise, and these are not merely "synonyms" of *hupsos* (Russell 1964, xxxi–xxxii n.7), but are its equivalents (e.g. *megethos*, *ta megala*, *huperphuēs*, etc.). And if they are, it is because they were grouped together in the minds of earlier generations of critics, rhetoricians, and others who found more than one kind of object worthy of labeling, in some way, sublime. It is nothing more than a reflex of the current views that anyone who discusses grandeur in pre-Longinian contexts (e.g. Innes 1985; O'Sullivan 1992) automatically assumes that the available evidence has to do with the grand style or its emergence, without considering whether such searches do not, in fact, turn up evidence of the *sublime* (see Quadlbauer 1958; Shuger 1984). Perhaps we should start to

recognize that the sublime – in our impoverished, simplex label for the idea – is a multilayered category and object in the minds of ancient critics and writers. For this very reason, terminology is not the best way to determine its presence or absence in an author. The more valid criterion is to measure the author's pulse rate.

What about the remaining passages? Text 2, the opening words of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On the Universe* (391a1–5; trans. Furley, adapted), reminds us of Longinus' detailed excursus on the sublimity of nature in chs. 34–35, where he sings his hymn to the cosmos in all its startling wondrousness – the universe, the great rivers (the Nile, Danube, and the Rhine), Ocean, and Etna (an account that repays comparison with those of Lucretius, Seneca, and the *Aetna* poet) – or of Longinus' analyses of Homer in ch. 9, where he repeatedly invokes the dimensions of the universe and comments on a cosmogony (Gen. 1:3). The Longinian sublime is two parts nature and three parts art (8.1), and it is consistently themed by nature, though it is safer to say that whenever Longinus thinks of nature he conceives of it as *hyper*-natural – as something that is *megalophuēs* ("grand natured") and *huperphuēs* ("extraordinary in nature") – which is to say, as *sublimely* natural. "*Hupsos* …tears everything up like a thunderbolt," he says in his initial definition of the sublime, retrieving an old commonplace associated with Pericles (1.4; Ar. *Ach.* 530–531; Plut. *Per.* 8.2–3; Cic. *Or.* 29). Thereafter, the natural sublime is woven directly into Longinus' view of sublimity. His description of the art of language is an ongoing flirtation with the language of nature in its most extreme forms: its light flashes and blinds (12.4; 34.4), its fires rage and burn (12.4), its torrents flood (12.5), its winds attack in squalls (20.3; 22.1), its quantities are preternaturally large (36.1), it resembles life and living things that are ecstatically alive (30.1). In this way linguistic events – textual moments – *become* events of nature, catastrophes, and cataclysms in words and of syntax. The sublime thrives in a recreation of nature through art – always slyly, because the art of the sublime is forever staged *as though it were* an effect of nature. But it does so because it originates, somewhere along the line, in an appreciation of the powers of nature, which almost invariably suggests the nature of the divine.

Phusiologia, or natural inquiry (e.g. cosmology, astronomy, or geology) – and not only "scientific excurses of any kind" within a non-scientific work (Russell 1964; cf. xxxviii; contrast Demetr. *Eloc*. 75, 231; schol. Eur. *Hipp.* 514; Men. Rhet. 336.25–337.32 Spengel; Psellus *Theol.* 21.31 Gautier; Roberts 1899, 79) – is one of the ideal genres for writing about and employing sublimity; it is a "place …where one should deluge [the reader] with a flood of language and emotions" (12.5; cf. Cic. *Or.* 16, 119). If the admission of *phusiologia* surprises, all the more surprising is Longinus' complete nonchalance while he makes it, as if he were stating something utterly uncontroversial. In fact, he is. Writing on nature was a recognized element in

the tradition of the sublime well before Longinus and Caecilius came along to treat of *hupsos* in rhetorical criticism. One of the best known examples is Pericles. Drawing on Anaxagoras, he "suffused his rhetoric with *phusiologia*, like a dye," and from *phusiologia* he acquired great sublimity of thought (*to hupsēlonoun*) (Plut. *Per.* 8.1–2; ibid., 8.3–4, 4.6–5.1; Pl. *Phdr.* 270a). Longinus assimilates these traits to Demosthenes, who becomes his exemplary meeting ground of nature and the sublime (1.4; 34.4). That Longinus is likewise well versed in the traditions of natural inquiry, with their penchant for paradox and marvel (35.4), and for what might be called the cosmological sublime, is evident from the astonishing similarities in *On the Sublime* to text 3 above, which comes from a work by the Stoic Cleomedes entitled *The Heavens* (2.1.171–183 Todd; trans. Bowen and Todd 2004, adapted). "How does [Homer] magnify the gods? He measures the speed [of the horses in *Il.* 5.770–2] with a cosmic measure" (9.5). Longinus not only quotes the same three verses from Homer as Cleomedes does; he also uses the same language of a sublime cosmic distance and cosmic measurement in order to provide a sense of how the universe in its vastness exceeds the capacities of human thought (*huperphues*; *kosmikon diastēma*; *katametrei*). And if Cleomedes concludes that the size and speed of the cosmos surpass all words, Longinus is in agreement here too. Is Longinus familiar with Cleomedes' text, or vice versa? Or are they both working from a shared source or set of sources?

The likeliest scenario is that Cleomedes is drawing on some prior critical model, which he goes on to reject as mere puff. The fact that in their comments on these same verses the bT-scholia and Eustathius recall both Cleomedes and Longinus makes it all the more probable that Cleomedes was drawing from a source in Homeric criticism. Eustathius finds Homer's experiment in physical measurement (*metrōn*) highly poetic and prodigious (*poiētikōteron kai teratōdesteron*) (Eust. *Il.* 606.16–17 = 2.199.15–18 van der Valk). He immediately adds: "[Homer] says, 'as far as into the hazing distance' – which plainly marks out a distance [*diastēma*]" to be measured. Evidently Eustathius saw no contradiction between the physics and the poetics of the Homeric image. Nor did his Hellenistic sources. And neither did, ultimately, Homer, who intuitively grasped this very connection when he sought to describe in words Hera's swift movement as she was driven by her divine steeds "through the space between the earth and the starry heaven" from Olympus to Troy (*Il.* 5.769; see further Hunter 2009, 149–160).

Even if Cleomedes is reflecting a pre-existing interpretation of Homer, there is no reason to reject the idea that Longinus is exploiting cosmological writings such as those by Cleomedes or Crates of Mallos, the Homerist grammarian and paradoxical dabbler in cosmology who left his imprint all over the scholia to Homer. The relevance of Crates to the Longinian context is undeniable (Porter 1992), and Crates may even be Cleomedes' immediate source. But

Cleomedes and Longinus share one more conceptual trait in common. After he quotes the verses, Longinus has us imagine a mind-boggling scenario: looking at these verses and their hyperbolic grandeur (*dia tēn huperbolēn tou megethous*), "one is bound say that if the horses of the gods were to take two more swift strides, they would no longer find any room in the universe" (9.5). Longinus is patently quoting from problems in cosmology, some of which reach back to Archytas, who wondered what happens when you reach your arm out past the finite limits of the universe (47A24 DK), before finding their way into Cleomedes too (*Cael*. 1.1.17–19, 39–60, 81–97; etc.). The final upshot for Longinus is that the universe is immeasurably large, while the sublime Homer is uniquely qualified to register this exhilarating uncertainty. Cleomedes has his own way of stating the same criterion of sublimity: the universe for him is immeasurably vast; its speed "has no limit, and no notion of it can be formed" or "expressed;" it is "of almost unlimited size" (*apeiromegethēs*) (2.1.169–170; 2.1.343). This is Cleomedes' *cosmic* sublime. But it is genetically linked to Longinus' own idea of sublimity, however much scholars today may wish to deny the fact (Bühler 1964, 24–25; Russell 1964, xxxviii–xxxxix; Kühn 1941, 51–52 is the outlier).

The Manifold Traditions of the Sublime before Longinus

The four passages with which we began are the tip of a much bigger iceberg, and others like them can be multiplied at will. But the outcome remains the same no matter how many examples are adduced: once we look beyond Longinus, the current picture of what can count as sublime in antiquity changes dramatically; and so does our view of Longinus' work in turn. The best clue to what is sublime for Longinus is not a matter of terminology (*hupsos*, *megethos*, *deinotēs*), but a series of thematic indices and conceptual patterns that exhibit a logic of relations (steep heights, profound depths, sudden and extreme shifts, gaps, transgressive limits, sharp collisions and contrasts, moments of extreme danger, risk, and crisis, excessiveness of various kinds captured by verbal prefixes that mean "beyond" and "outside of"). If these markers of sublimity are found in earlier writings, then we stand a good chance of discovering examples of sublimity at work in them too.

The further back in time one goes, the more the instances accumulate across genres and between discourse types (cosmology, paradoxology, theology, philosophies of matter and the incorporeal, rhetoric, and literature – the passage from Euripides' *Phaethon* is itself a blend of several of these). And ever so slowly, it begins to look as if an entire network of connections can be spun out to account for a persistent and abiding interest in the sublime and its inner logic – or better yet, logics – to account for an attention to some, if not all, of the very kinds of features, details, and effects that would later take hold of Longinus' gaze. Or rather, what results is a sublime that exists in different

forms or pre-forms leading up to the Longinian treatise, none of which needs resemble Longinus' sublime any more closely than a distant relative. Longinus in no way holds a unique patent on the concept: his rendition of the sublime is highly selective, and he recasts it to suit his own specific ends. After all, Longinus set out to hijack a tradition, not to encapsulate it in some academic doxography. Even if Longinus remains the best place to start any investigation into the sublime in antiquity, there is no reason to limit our view to his.

The sublime cannot have originated out of the blue. Prima facie, there is every reason to suspect that Longinus' treatise acts like a collecting point for earlier traditions. All signs point, in fact, to a tradition of sublime criticism that pre-existed Longinus, and one that was rooted in a widespread sensibility. Longinus may be our single richest, if prejudicial, testimony to the ancient discourse and category of the sublime. (He mentions debts or disagreements involving several, often unnamed predecessors in sublime criticism beyond Caecilius.) But he can, nevertheless, prove to be a reliable clue to the ancient category of the sublime even in its earliest phases.

As it turns out, an unbroken inheritance runs from Homer to Longinus – for the terms and logic of the sublime originated first among the poets. Indeed, the sublime is an aesthetic category that is as old as Greek literature itself. To take only a few salient examples beyond those already mentioned, consider these: "The earth is reeling: in its depths the thunder bellows resoundingly, the fiery tendrils of the lightning flash light up, and whirling clouds carry the dust along: … sky and sea are one, confused together" (Aesch. *Prom.* 1080–1090; trans. Grene); a Sophoclean chorus speaks of "laws that stand high [*hupsipodes*], generated in lofty heaven, the laws whose only father is Olympus!" (Soph. *OT* 865–68; trans. Lloyd-Jones); Pindar transforms success into a "summit" (*akros*) of "absolute glory," a "great height of achievement" (*koruphē*) "surpassing all men" (*huper anthrōpōn*), bringing victors "boundless" or "massive fame" (*apletou doxas*, *pelōrion kleos*) won at the "loftiest" (*hupsēlos*) games (*N.* 1.11, 33; *P.* 3.111; *O.* 5.1, 4.3–4, 10.21; *I.* 2.33–36, 4.20; 5.44–45; etc.). In fact, nothing is more Longinian than the thought that "achievements without risk win no honor among men or on hollow ships, but many remember if a noble deed is accomplished with toil" (Pind. *O.* 6.9–11). Finally there is the Homeric landscape, which is littered with sublime objects and framed by a sublime perspective (one exemplified by the gods above and by plunging depths below, often in massive contrasts), not least by virtue of its remoteness from the diminished present. For this reason, Homer was felt to be the fountain (the "Ocean") of all poetic grandeur, as Longinus was only among the last to notice in antiquity (9.13). All this high-flown poetic language and imagery, and the finely tuned sensibility that produced both, were taken over, first by prose writers in different genres, and then by critics.

That the current view of the sublime is too restrictive and constraining should be evident by now. But the current view was not always in place. It was once fashionable, even orthodoxy, to see at work in Longinus' essay a powerful dependency on Posidonius, the Stoic philosopher from the late second to mid-first centuries BC. Some even credited Posidonius with being the direct source of Longinus' concept of the sublime (Mutschmann 1913 ; Norden 1923, 104–106; Kühn 1941; Quadlbauer 1958, 87), though occasionally Plato was thought to be a contributing factor (Kühn). With this turn to philosophy came a much-needed appreciation of nature, the cosmos, and divinity. But the price for this conceptual expansion was overzealous source attribution, which led to unprovable speculations about Longinus' philosophical allegiances and about the origins of the sublime. Once "the Posidonius myth" fell into disrepute, so did its appurtenances (Dobson 1918; Kroll 1918, 96–98; Jones 1926; Schrijvers 2006, 98–99). Unfortunately, the baby was thrown out with the bath water. The Longinian sublime survived this demolition shorn of all genuine interest in nature and *phusiologia*, and was reduced to a treatise operating within a rhetorical and literary context alone – and was eventually further reduced to an "effect" that had no clear rhetorical or literary affinities at all (though the Posidonian thesis occasionally survives minus the physics: Russell 1964, xxxix; Chiron 2001, e.g. 340). An intermediate period of investigation into the sublime before the second century BC was the most promising, but also the least heeded (Wehrli 1946; Quadlbauer 1958). The leads to Plato have also been long since abandoned, or attenuated (Russell 1964, xxxix; but see Michel 1976; Porter 2010b).

Though there are many places one can go looking for larger, pre-Longinian tendencies and traditions of thought, the sublimity of nature (the natural sublime) may be the best place to begin. Here, *hupsos* in its original physical sense of elevation can provide a thread. Homer, once again, sets the tone. Conventionally regarded as ideal instances of the sublime (*Subl.* 9.6–8), the Homeric gods are literally this as well. Zeus is *hupsizugos*, "seated aloft" on Olympus; he "dwells in the skies," and entreaties by mortals are made to him "up on high" (*Il.* 4.166; 7.69; 10.16; trans. Lattimore). But like other gods, Zeus is also tied to terrifying natural forces. He is "high-" or "loud-thundering" (*hupsibremetēs*) (*Il.* 1.354; 10.5–12; etc.) and his din is called *deinos* (*Il*. 20.56–57). Hesiod's cosmogony, his theogony, and his Gigantomachy stage nature as a sublime spectacle in a more focused way. When the Presocratics came along, they created a new, rich tradition of speculation about nature, gods, the heavens, the vast plethora of sensations in the world, and the highest potentials imaginable (if not attainable) by mankind. In some quarters, matter itself was made sublime, whether in its hard and irreducible materiality or in its increasingly refined and sublimated state, at which point matter finally was seen to rival divinity itself (see Porter 2010a, 138–147).

The impact of the Presocratics on the fifth and fourth centuries was immense. At each turn, the language of the sublime made itself felt (*ta meteōra*, *ta aerobatein*, *ta aētheria*, *to hupsēlonoun*, "thoughts" that "go higher than air," *hupsēloteron aitheros*): Aesch. *Suppl.* 96–103; Ar. *Nub*.; Ar. *Av*. 417, 688–690, 704; Pl. *Phdr*. 270a; Adesp. *TrGF* 2.127.1). Sophists (Gorgias and others) translated these exalted ideas into more pragmatically oriented rhetorical conceits, which found their way into the Academy and the Peripatos and in this way became an enduring element of the mainstream of rhetoric and criticism. Meanwhile, the inquiry into nature's sublimities and the divine went on unabated, often in collusion with earlier poetry (Plato's *Phaedrus* is a case in point, as is Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 12). This amalgam of interests was carried forward by Hellenistic poets, critics, and thinkers who were attuned to the wonders of nature in its contrastive dimensions (the massively grand and the microscopically small) and to rapturous euphony (e.g. Eratosthenes, Aratus, Crates of Mallos; see Porter 2011). Even Epicureans from around 100 BC speak of the *hupsos* of cosmic language in an ethically uplifting sense (*P. Herc*. 831 col. 8 N f. 75 Körte, echoing Epicurus' *Letter to Pythocles* and Metrodorus fr. 37 Körte). Roman poets carried the traditions forward in various genres, including didactic poetry (from Ennius to Manilius). If rhetoricians after Aristotle sometimes indulged in these wider speculations, for the most part they limited themselves to narrower inquiries into the art of creating effective speech beyond the limits of reason: here, sublimity designated the highest poetic effects of language *tout court* (Demetrius, Cicero, Dionysius, Quintilian). Longinus offers a rich index of these myriad strains, and also betrays his truest inheritance: *reflection on thought at the limits of the humanly conceivable*.

Standing back, we can make the following adjustments in the available picture of the sublime. The sublime does not emerge as a literary critical concept only with Caecilius and Longinus. It was already present and actively informing writers in the rhetorical and critical traditions from the end of the fifth century, and the way was prepared by long traditions in poetry and philosophy starting with Homer and Hesiod. What emerged sometime between the age of Augustus and that of the Antonines was not a new idea, but a rebaptizing of an old word (*hupsos*) along with its cognates and fellow travelers (including *sublimis*, *excelsus*, *megethos*, and *magnitudo*) as terms of art that could be used to capture pre-existing aesthetic notions and sensibilities. Longinus was by no means the first to give expression to sublimity as a concept in antiquity; he was merely the most eloquent spokesperson of the sublime tradition, so far as we can tell today. This, at least, is Longinus' own view of himself, and the evidence we have both confirms this picture and helps to fill it out.

Even if the sublime achieved a kind of voguish appeal in late Augustan Rome, this does not erase the fact that the idea and its myriad expressions pervade much of antiquity. Nor is the sublime limited to literary appreciation, even if

its roots lie in literature. Rather, the sublime is best viewed as a broadly aesthetic concept that underlies or accompanies other conceptual formations. The earliest occurrences of *sublimis* and *sublimitas*, after all, refer to cosmological contexts (e.g. Naev. *Lycurg.* 30–2 Warmington; Enn. *Achil.* IV Jocelyn;), while *sublimis* is used to designate everything from the upper air and its surrounding atmosphere to the seat of divinity (Acc. *Med*. 396; Enn. *Thy.* 351 = Cic. *DND* 2.65). Finally, there is one more, hitherto unexplored clue as to how the sublime could have been so widely available and gone undetected for so long: the sublime lurks in all judgments of beauty (see below). In sum, the evidence we have for the sublime before Longinus not only obliges us to enlarge the scope of our inquiry into the sublime. It also points to a widespread phenomenon that necessitates a complete rearticulation of our understanding of aesthetic thought in antiquity.

The Sublime as an Aesthetic Value

First and foremost, the sublime needs to be reconceived as a category of aesthetic judgment and value that vied with others (beauty, wonder, pleasure, pain – in a word, the whole gamut of aesthetic perceptions) long before Caecilius and Longinus came to discuss it. Only an aesthetic understanding of the sublime can make sense of its prevalence in so many different areas of ancient thought. *Aesthetic* here should be understood in the widest possible sense of the term, as a category that is tied to the primary features of sentience and experience (Porter 2010a), and therefore as relevant, or potentially this, whenever the mind comes into sensuous contact with its objects. The sublime can be viewed as the most intense and vibrant dimension of any aesthetic experience: it singles out moments when what is touched, heard, seen, or felt almost seems to come alive for the beholder. The impact of the sublime can be disorienting, exhilarating, or supremely quieting, in part simply thanks to the intensity of the experience itself. If this is right, we can speculate that the sublime captures ordinary experiences in their extraordinary quality (cf. *Subl.* 40.3). But the shapes that sublimity assumes will vary depending on any number of factors.

Roughly speaking, the sublime can take two distinct forms, both originating in a confrontation with material sensation in its brute form, but resulting in different responses: either in a recoil from the experience and a pursuit of immateriality (an immaterial sublime) or in a desire to dwell more deeply upon the experience in all its material richness (a material sublime). The materiality and phenomenality of things are elusive entities, and they often point as much toward the intangible and the evanescent (fleeting sounds, intervals of time or space, shimmering colors and other effects of surface) as they do toward hard and resisting realities (stone, ink, wood, atoms). The sublime lies in their midst, at their troubling point of juncture, where the line between the material and the immaterial is least distinct. The very

precariousness of sensuous experience can itself be productive of sublimity.

In this light, we can easily account for Longinus' ecstasies in the face of a hyperbaton in Demosthenes that displays the limits of syntactical cohesion and, in the process, sends the reader to the limits of subjective cohesion: if the sentence collapses, so does the world (*Subl*. 22.3–4). The same goes for Cicero's location of rhetorical sublimity in a Platonic ideal that lies beyond the senses and even this world (*Or.* 7; 19; 100). We can also account for the sublime language that surrounds Plato's account of the ascent of the soul to a "place beyond the heavens" (a *huperouranios topos*) and Lucretius' image of the mind of Epicurus transcending the "flaming ramparts of the universe" (*DRN* 1.72–4), even though the one describes a trajectory away from matter while the other describes a trajectory into the very heart of matter. Plato proceeds to describe what is to be seen in this ecstasy of the soul – only, there is not much to be seen per se: "It is there that true Being dwells, without colour or shape, that cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's pilot, can behold it" (247c6–7; trans. Hackforth 1945).

Plato is not merely describing a mystical vision or giving a lesson in metaphysics. He is reforming contemporary views of what can and cannot be described aesthetically; he is contributing to the language of aesthetic apprehension, just as he does in the *Ion* and in parts of the *Republic* and the *Philebus*. We need to be attentive to the fact that *all* the thinkers and writers in antiquity were involved in a similar project to Plato's whenever they set out to describe experience, beauty, or higher (or more terrifying) things. They were all making statements about how to use such language, and were seeking either to expand or restrict its inherited limits. And when they did so, they would draw upon (and simultaneously contribute to) the concept of the sublime in order to sanction areas of *incontestable value*. Longinus is doing nothing different from Plato in his essay when he speaks of the way the mind's thoughts travel beyond the limits of the universe (35.3) or when he insists that the sublime challenges the imagination to reach for something that is "higher than human" (36.3). He is broaching the same theme as Plato's – the flight of the mind (Jones 1926; cf. Halliwell 2012, ch. 7) – with the same linguistic elements and tools, albeit from within a somewhat different conceptual framework.

Plato calls his supreme value *beauty*. What makes it sublime? In naming a beauty that lies beyond beautiful things, and even beyond beauty itself, Plato is describing something like the sublimity of beauty or its essence, what Plotinus would later call the *hyper*-beautiful (*to huperkalon*). In one sense, such aesthetic terms merely describe shades of value, which at their farthest limit of intensity no longer register any difference at all. *Kalos*, after all, means *fine*, not *beautiful*. The superlative of *kalos* (*to huperkalon*) means "extraordinarily fine," "the finest possible (conceivable) thing" – which is to say, sublime. Hence, for Longinus the sublime can be beautiful too and

sometimes the reverse is true (e.g. 5.1: “beauty of style, sublimity, and charm”; 30.1: “grandeur, beauty, old world charm,” etc.; 35.3: “the grandeur and beauty” of life; 39.3). In his insensitivity to the distinction Longinus is following ingrained precedents, which go back to Homer, for instance in his formulaic pairing of beauty and greatness (*kalos te megas te*). Together the two words mean, quite simply, “extraordinary” and “sublime,” a sense they will preserve well into later antiquity. Did *beauty* ever mean anything else than such a consummate experience? We are probably wrong to assume it did (see Wehrli 1946, 22; Porter 2010a, 471).

For Longinus and others, grandeur of thought and writing, and the sublime in particular, has less to do with grandeur or sublimity per se than with an increased contact on the part of the beholder with the various dimensions of any given aesthetic object. *That is, the sublime seems to have more to do with an intensification of aesthetic experience than with “the sublime” in its conventional senses*, and in particular those which have to do with height, exaltation, or transcendence. In this light, the boundaries between beauty and sublimity can be seen to melt away in favor of a more generalized view of aesthetic perception, one that is arranged by intensities rather than by qualitative labels, and one that is governed by values rather than aesthetics in the narrower sense of a theory of beauty in art. On such a view, what beauty and the sublime name is *intense* experiences, or rather the very intensity of experiences, however these are had (no matter what their object), and which in the end are felt to be pleasurable even if they can also cause dread, fear, or pain. What beauty and the sublime point to, then, is irrefragable *value*. In sum, laying down criteria of what counts as sublime is a way of determining what is worthy of one’s utmost attention, while also attempting to forestall debate on the question. Retracing the sublime allows us to retrace these contests of value in antiquity.

Reconceived in this way, the sublime can be seen to evolve continuously in antiquity, from Homer onward, in literature and in philosophy, and within further hybrid genres that are particularly prone to sublimity, including the literature of wonders, didactic poetry, and literary and allegorical criticism of earlier texts. There is a corresponding sensibility to be found in visual culture (see *Subl.* 36.3; Ar. *Rhet*. 3.12.1414a8–17; Demetr. *Eloc.* §76; Strab. 8.3.30; Dio *Or*. 12.49–85; Neer 2010). And ethical inquiries at their highest pitch of interest are often difficult to tell apart from those just named. In a word, the sublime turns out to be an essential way of comprehending Classical literature, philosophy, art, and spiritual inquiries at their most exuberant and searching moments, cutting across them all. Indeed, the idea of the sublime virtually creates for itself a genre of its own within antiquity, framing the terms of a conversation that spans the areas of criticism, metaphysics, theology, ethical self-inquiry, and natural inquiry, while it eventually takes root in ideological formations, most palpably in the ideals and ideologies that

surround Classicism, canons, ruins (Pausanias [Porter 2001]), fragments (literary quotations as epiphanies of lost grandeur [Hertz 1983]), and all notions of cultural belonging, where the sublime typically plays a strong suturing role. To piece together the traditions of the sublime in a more encompassing fashion is to reconceive how we view antiquity as a whole.

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FURTHER READING

The two best articles on the sublime before Longinus remain Wehrli (1946), which is magisterial (though limited by its focus on Democritus and Gorgias as prime movers), and Quadlbauer (1958), which is more diffuse and rapid but covers a great deal of earlier and later ground. Shuger (1984) usefully develops Quadlbauer. An untapped source remains the work of W. Capelle, esp. (1912). Good inroads have recently been made challenging the status quo, mainly in Roman literature in the wake of Lucretius, esp. Michel (1969, 1976), Schiesaro (2003, 22–25, 52–55, 127–135), Porter (2004, 2007), Leigh (2006), Schrijvers (2006), Conte (2007), Hardie (2009), and Williams (2012, esp. 213–230). A handy introduction to the history and theory of the sublime may be found in Shaw (2006), and now the essays gathered in Costelloe

(2012). For a more complete and alternative account of the sublime in antiquity see now Porter (2015).

CHAPTER 27
Poikilia

Adeline Grand-Clément

Poikilia is a key notion for the understanding of certain specific features of ancient aesthetics, but it is not easy to discern all its subtleties, which probably explains why, up to now, there has been no general review of the concept. The Greeks used the term *poikilia* to refer specifically to the effect produced by the assemblage of different colors and materials on an object, but also to express the more generic ideas of variety, versatility, intricacy, and complexity. LSJ (Liddell-Scott-Jones online Greek–English Lexicon) offers the following translations: "marking with various colors, embroidering; being marked with various colors, striped, spotted; varied aspect, diversity; variety, intricacy, ornamentation." This protean notion is used in many different contexts: in the field of arts and crafts as well as in those of music, poetry, rhetoric, medicine, or politics. In this chapter, I will explore the multifariousness of *poikilia*, so as to establish, from an aesthetic point of view, the links between its semantic ramifications. I will focus mostly on the Archaic period, since it is during this period that the taste for *poikilia* effects increases and becomes widespread in Greek society, especially within the aristocratic elite of the cities (Fowler 1984, 1991; see also Grand-Clément 2011, 193, 419–488).

Defining *Poikilia*. From Colors to Versatility: An Evolution toward Abstraction?

In order to try and get closer to the semantics of *poikilia*, it is worth considering the literary uses of the word. The noun, documented from the fifth century BC onward,[1] is linked to the adjective *poikilos*, which is used in many Archaic poems and as early as in the Mycenaean tablets, associated with richly ornamented pieces of cloth.[2] *Poikilos* can be translated in several ways: "many-coloured, spotted, pied, dappled; tattooed; wrought in various colours" (according to LSJ). It comes from an Indo-European root, **peik-/pik-*, "to prick, to mark," "to cut, to incise," referring to the field of graphic and pictorial arts and closely associated with the notion of adornment (Bader 1987; see also Barber 1991, 359). It led to *pictura* and *pingere*, "to paint," in Latin. The reference to craftsmanship is confirmed by the uses that ancient authors, especially Archaic poets, make of *poikilos* and of the verb *poikillō* ("work in various colours, work in embroidery, embroider garments; embellish, adorn, vary, change," according to LSJ). Both words refer to finely crafted valuable objects – painted, sculpted, chiseled, or woven – that offer a

fascinating show when their variegated surface is animated by the vibration, gleaming, and shivering of light.

Characterized by a radiance that is composite and multiple, artifacts described as *poikiloi* resemble the prodigious *daidalea* (Frontisi-Ducroux 2000, esp. 52–55 for the parallel between *daidaleon* and *poikilon*). But there are at least two noteworthy differences. First, *poikilia* is not exclusive to artifacts. Indeed, the Greeks use the term *poikilos* for living beings, in particular for three types of animals: snakes whose bodies are covered with rings and scales, birds with a variegated plumage, and animals with a mottled coat, such as the fawn or the panther.[3] Their bodies display a variety of shapes and colors and composite surfaces that contrast with the smooth and homogeneous surface of human skin (*khrōs*).[4] *Poikilia* can also characterize certain men, heroes or divinities, such as Prometheus or Odysseus (e.g. Hes. *Th*. 510–511; Eur. *IA*. 526). What these have in common is less a "multicolored" or "versicolor" physical appearance, than specific aptitudes that characterize *mētis*, the crafty and cunning intelligence that plays a crucial role in Greek imagination. Detienne and Vernant have brought to light the close connection that originally existed between *poikilia* and *mētis* (1974, 25–31). The connection endures into the Classical period, to the point that applying the term *poikilos* to an individual is in itself sufficient to suggest the type of clever intelligence that, by then, could be denigrated (A. *Equ*. 758–759; Villacèque 2010, 144–145). *Poikilia* thus evokes a non-dialectic kind of thought, which proceeds by circumvention and follows indirect and somewhat labyrinthine routes, like a maze.

Consequently, the word does not necessarily apply to a visual phenomenon. Here lies the second noteworthy difference with the *daidalea*: *poikilos* is frequently used in a metaphorical sense – increasingly so as time passes – but, and this must be stressed, since as early as the Archaic period. Illustrating this, *poikilia* characterizes Odysseus' *mētis* (e.g. *Il*. 11.482; *Od.* 3.163), but also the harmonious singing of the poets (Pind. fr. 194, 2 Maehler), the skilled practice of a doctor (Hp. *Art*. 62), and the colorful language of the orator (Dem. 29 1; Isoc. 5.27). In each of these examples, what is at stake is a high level of sophistication, the fact that a totally mastered knowledge – that may appear to the layman as mysterious or even deceitful – is being put into practice. The democratic regime condemned by Plato is also *poikilos*, and compared to a shimmering coat that might appeal to women and children (Pl. *Rep*. 8.557c and 558c). LSJ thus distinguishes, *s.v*. *poikilos*, a second cluster of meanings, referring not to color or even to the visual domain but to abstract data: "changeful, diversified, manifold; intricate, complex; changeable, unstable." It could be tempting to interpret this second meaning as the result of a linear historical trend, leading from the field of visual representation to that of metaphor and abstraction. That is the conclusion drawn by Rinaudo at the end of her lexical study of the adjective *poikilos* (Rinaudo 1994). In a more recent article, she concludes that by the Hellenistic period the adjective retains only

the meaning of "varied" and has lost all reference to the idea of color (Rinaudo 2009, 59). But that would be too simple: in fact, the two clusters of meaning are deeply entwined in Archaic imagination, as suggested by the Hesiodic image of the nightingale's "mottled throat" (*poikilodeiron*, Hes. *Op.* 203). Indeed, the image is less about the color of the bird's feathers than it is about the movement of its neck and the plaintive melody it sings, attempting to mollify the hawk that holds it in its sharp claw (Nagy 1996, 59–86, who translates "having a varied[-sounding] throat" and associates the nightingale with the figure of the *rhapsōdos*). Trying to pinpoint what the different elements qualified by the Greeks as "variegated," "mottled," have in common – be they abstract or concrete – one will notice that the question of colors is, of course, important but that it does not entirely cover the subject: *poikilia* does not correspond exactly to what we understand as "multicolored" or even "versicolor."[5]

The Arts of *Poikilia*: Virtuosity, Perfection, and Harmony

Let us start by analyzing the origin and nature of *poikilia* artifacts. They are special in that they are highly elaborate, constructed by the combination of variously colored materials. Several techniques enable the production of such "marvels for the eyes" (*thaumata idesthai*). Metallurgy (toreutics and jewelry), weaving, and painting are the three main fields of arts and crafts that have to do with *poikilia*. Each *technē* requires its own operational mode, specific techniques and materials, but all of them consist in uniting varied elements, in juxtaposing them to create a composite colored surface.

Let us begin by considering toreutics. The divine prototype of the virtuoso sculptor/blacksmith is Hephaestus, the illustrious cripple, who fashioned Achilles' shield. In book 18 of the *Iliad*, the poet describes with many details the way in which the god adorned the bronze surface with gold, silver, pewter, and *kuanos* inlays, thus shaping a glistening, miniature image of the world (Dubel 2006). The last scene Hephaestus created, to complete the set, displays a group of young men and women who move gracefully and pass each other as they dance. The poet points out that the god "inlayed with colors" (*poikille*) a choir (*khoros*, *Il.* 18.590). Why such an insistence on the *poikilia* of the scene? It is not only to suggest the chromatic variety but also to emphasize the impression of movement created by the sheer brilliance of the colors and the intricacy of the pattern. *Poikilia* evokes the breathtaking spinning of the performing youths: it expresses the dynamics of the scene fashioned by Hephaestus. Moreover the dancers do not move in chaos or in confusion: they follow a well-established choreography, invented by Daedalus, the illustrious designer of the twisting and turning labyrinth. The

youths are actually performing the crane dance (*geranos*), which is characterized by its crisscrossing movements reminiscent of weaving (Scheid and Svenbro 2003, 83).

This leads us to the second – and probably the most emblematic – kind of *poikiloi* artifacts the Greeks were fond of: textiles. It is sometimes said that *poikilia* refers specifically to the art of embroidery, but in Archaic poetry it is weaving that is first and foremost concerned (Wace 1948). It is a mostly feminine and collective activity, unlike metallurgy. For instance, the queens of the Homeric epics weave shimmering garments in their palaces, intertwining colored threads on their looms and studding them with different ornaments (e.g. *Il.* 22.441). The fabrics thus fashioned are true masterpieces, worthy of being compared with poetic compositions. One can read narratives in their polychromatic patterns. Thus, the coat Helen weaves at the beginning of the *Iliad* immortalizes the feats of the Trojan fighters (*Il.* 3.125–127). Again, the art of *poikilia* leaves nothing to chance: the elaborate ornamentation obeys a pre-established and harmonious global pattern. In certain cases the weaver fashioning textiles decorated with narrative scenes turns out to be a demiurge. For example, in a poem composed during the mid-sixth century BC by Pherecydes of Syros, Zas creates a beautiful and variegated veil for Chthonia, his future wife. The mythographer explains that on this beautiful and great *pharos*, the god "weaves with colored strands [*poikillei*] Ge and Ogenos and the halls of Ogenos" (Pherecydes of Syros, DK 7 B 2.14–16; cf. Kirk and Raven 1983, 61). While composing the images of the earth and ocean, embodied by Ge and Ogenos – another name for Okeanos – Zas shaped the world's surface: the art of *poikilia* takes on a cosmogonic dimension (Grand-Clément 2009, 168–170).

Painting, finally, also allows for the creation of multicolored designs. We know that on the agora in Athens, the portico that sheltered the paintings by Polygnotus of Thasos and other well-known artists was called the *stoa poikilē* (e.g. Aeschin. 3.186; Paus. 1.15). In one of his poems (DK 31 B 23), Empedocles mentions the virtuosity of skillful painters who use a harmonious mixture (*harmoniēi meixante*) of many-colored pigments (*polukhroa pharmaka*) to make variegated votive tablets covered with various figures – animal, human, and divine – thus creating reduced images of the *kosmos*. Once more, the accomplished and masterly display of colors – the philosopher uses the verb *poikillō* – is linked to a cosmogonic action. Indeed, Empedocles draws a comparison between the art of the two painters and the way in which two antagonistic primordial forces, Love and Hate, shaped the whole of the organized world and its extreme diversity, from four primordial elements. The passage tells us about the kind of color assemblage that characterizes *poikilia*; the elements combined by the craftsmen are not completely merged – that would lead to their total dissolution – but rather they are arranged or juxtaposed in order to create effects of contrast, as Ierodiakonou points out:

"'Mix' is used not in the sense of completely blending pigments of various colours in order to produce new hues, but in the sense of arranging pigments side by side in order to realistically portray the world" (Ierodiakonou 2004, 92). To express this otherwise, the colors and materials react to one another: *poikilia* effects are produced by a technique that "is not one of mixing that would immediately neutralize the diversity but rather one of juxtaposition, as for weaving with coloured thread, to which the painters' brushstrokes or the mosaic tesserae correspond" (tr. from Wersinger 2001 38). Such a process thus hinges on a particular use of colors, related to what the Greeks called *skiagraphia*, an art of *trompe l'oeil* and illusion.[6]

Regarding vase-painting, the many experimentations of the Archaic period well testify to the constant search for color variations, variegation, and brilliance (Cohen 2008, 5–6). Craftsmen used the chromatic opposition between the black glaze and the red-orange color of baked clay to create optical illusions on the surface of the containers, at the same time as they played on their shape and volume. The black-figure technique, developed in Corinth in the late seventh century BC and perfected in Athens in the sixth century, makes good use of the contrast between the ocher background and the lustrous black painted figures, with their incised outlines and purple and white highlights. This kind of decoration is not really what we would call "*multi*color" or "*poly*chrome," since the range of colors remains quite limited, but it does correspond to *poikilia* – in that *poikilia* is opposed to the uniformity of a flat surface and allows for a kind of visual complexity. This is confirmed by a poem by Pindar, where the Attic black-figure amphorae given to the winning athletes of the Panathenaic games every four years are described as *pampoikiloi* (Pi. *N.* 10.35–36). The making of bilingual amphorae, with decorations in the black-figure technique on one side and in red-figure on the other, is also part of this striving for *poikilia*: it hints at the importance that the manipulation of color and the illusionist effects of *trompe l'oeil* had taken in the aristocratic culture of the late Archaic period (Neer 2002, 32–34). Further testimony to the vitality of experimentation among Attic potters, between the years 530 and 480, can be found in the studies gathered by Cohen (2008). The potters did not aim for realism, as would later be the case among Roman muralists, but to catch the eye, to surprise the viewer, and to prompt discussion.

There is a great deal of archaeological evidence, beyond ceramics, suggesting how interested the Greeks were in chromatic contrasts and the way in which light can animate artifacts. The Mycenaeans had already mastered the art of making sparkling jewelry and weaponry; they had, to that end, developed the techniques of niello and "black bronze" (Muller-Dufeu 2006). From the Archaic period onward, the tradition of acrolith statues gains in importance, in particular regarding the divine effigies that must manifest the splendor and the power of the immortals' bodies (Stewart 1990, 37). The most prestigious

statues combine gold and ivory, two substances that epitomize a kind of excellence and chromatic perfection, given their luminosity and capacity to reflect the light when polished. The great bronzes are also inlayed with metal, stones, and colored glass. These inclusions enable the craftsman to highlight certain parts of the body and create effects of animation that make up for the sometimes sacerdotal postures of the bodies (Descamps-Lequime 2006). The statue of the charioteer dedicated to Apollo in Delphi in the early fifth century BC by the tyrant of Sicily, Polyzalos, in order to celebrate a victory at the chariot race, well illustrates this taste for the *poikilia* of bronzes (Museum of Delphi, inv. 3520 and 3540).

We lack similar evidence concerning textiles, despite the fact that these are a privileged medium of the crafted *poikilia*. Garments and hangings have not been preserved, barring a few very rare exceptions.[7] There have been finds on the edges of the Greek world, in particular around the Black Sea: for instance, tapestries with animal friezes and narrative figurative patterns were found in Crimean tombs of the fifth and fourth centuries. They give a fair image of what the Greeks could do (Morizot 2001, 15). Lydian textiles also demonstrate the existence of a highly developed craftsmanship regarding geometric ornamentation. One may find an echo of it in the decoration of Lycian tombs' ceilings: their painted checkered patterns imitate the dais and hangings that must have been used during funerals. But many-colored garments are mostly recorded on painted vases and sculpture (Morizot 2003). See, for example, the red dress, covered with rosettes and stars, on the sixth-century BC funerary statue of Phrasikleia, a young Athenian who died before she was married (Athens, National Museum, inv. 4889). Brinkman, with his recent proposal of its reconstruction, has shown that the designs were enhanced with gold and pewter, producing a brilliant and colorful effect (Brinkmann, Koch-Brinkmann, and Piening 2010). The sculptor may have wished to suggest the presence of sequins on the dress: archaeology does indeed show evidence of the use of metallic parts to decorate ceremonial garments, especially for the gods. The golden rosettes found in a *favissa* in Delphi, with the remnants of chryselephantine statues, were probably sewn on the divine effigies' garments, the fabric of which has not been preserved. Texts also carry information regarding sartorial *poikilia*: the inventories of garments dedicated to goddesses such as Artemis in Brauron show us the richness of their ornamentation, which sometimes includes silver or gold threads and embellishments (Cleland 2005).

In summary, the *poikilia* are the result of perfectly mastered craftsmanship, based on the inlaying and juxtaposition of varied materials, the organizing of patterns, or the meshing of colored threads. *Poikilia* thus refers to several techniques that share a common objective: to obtain a varied, glistening, and durable radiance – that is, to turn out what the Greeks called *agalmata*, valuables fit to delight the gods and men.[8] In Archaic times, these artifacts are

highly prized by the aristocrats, and contribute to the ostentation of a lifestyle associated with *habrosunē* and characterized by its great openness and receptivity toward "oriental" traditions (Kurke 1992).

But *poikilia* does not match exactly what we call the "multicolored," since it does not always imply a great number of colors. What matters is a contrastive and brilliant effect induced by the combination of different substances and shapes, to create a composite eye-catching sight. This explains why the Greeks, who seem to have excluded the sea from the scope of *poikilia*, despite its shimmering and changing hues and reflections, willingly compared the starry sky to a *poikilos* cloak.[9] The adjective emphasizes the intermittence of the scintillating light of the stars, and the diversity and complexity of patterns designed on the celestial surface, forming the constellations. As we can see, *poikilia* is more than a simple hybrid alliance of contrasting colors and substances. It is in no way a shapeless, random, or jumbled amalgamation: in the Archaic sensibility, it implies dynamics that create balance, order, beauty, and harmony – notions brought together under the term *kosmos* (Briand 2011). Here lies a noteworthy difference with Classical thought. Indeed, the Archaic aesthetics privileges a kind of *harmonia* that does not unify, but "lies in the union of variety while taking into account its singularities and differences" (tr. from Wersinger 2011, 24).

The Archaic poets use the image of the variegated earth to signify the completeness, fertility, and prosperity which they so highly prize. In the springtime, the flower-studded meadows offer a multicolored expanse, the beauty of which rejoices men's hearts. Pindar uses such an image to evoke the peace and growth recovered by the Cleonymides of Thebes, after a conflict: "But now again, after a winter's gloom lasting months, / it is as if the dappled [*poikilia*] earth had blossomed [*anthēsen*] with red roses / by the gods' designs" (Pi. *I*. 4.18–19; tr. H. Race). His use of the verb *antheō*, "to blossom," emphasizes the chromatic explosion that harmoniously saturates the meadows with bright colors. The intensity and radiance of the vernal scarlet contrast sharply with the winter darkness: the rhythm of the seasons results in an alternation between the opaque darkness and the variegation that is a token of plenitude. In an anonymous poem (sometimes attributed to Sappho), the evocation of springtime brings on a similar image, but that is expressed by tighter phrasing: "The many-crowned earth is adorned with colors [*poikilletai*]" (*Lyrica Adespota*, fr. 45, 1 Page). These examples illustrate the close relationship between *poikilia* and flowers: the variety and vitality of their chromatic tones contribute to the aesthetic pleasure they kindle among the Greeks (cf. Fowler 1984; Irwin 1997; Kei 2011, 233–234).

The ramifications of *poikilia* thus extend far beyond the field of the arts and crafts. Through variegation, one can consider the rich and fertile diversity of the world, apprehended as a textile, a shield, or a picture with its bright and gleaming colors. Chromatic arrangements symbolize the harmonious ordering

and balance of opposite forces that guarantee the proper functioning of the cosmic system. They foster delight, joy, and pleasure. But how exactly does *poikilia*'s charm operate?

What *Poikilia* Does: Pleasure, Enchantment, and Attraction

The arts of *poikilia* create artifacts that have something special, compared to other elaborate things. Indeed, the virtuosity and skilled knowledge which are at work in their making give them a special power. Like *agalmata*, these objects are full of *kharis*, the radiating grace that is the driving force of social relationships. As they circulate from one person to another, they affect both the senses and the emotions. Such is the case of the "enchanted" textiles whose formidable efficacy is very close to that of the *pharmaka*. Their action can be beneficial or harmful, depending on the intention of the one who fashions and manipulates them. Consider, for example, Aphrodite's colorful ribbon used by Hera to seduce Zeus (*Il.* 14.198–199 and 214–223; cf. Pironti 2007 , 42–45). It is more than a simple item of lingerie. Hera ties it across her breasts, thus managing to captivate her divine husband. But where does the fabric's irresistible power of attraction and persuasion come from? It lies in its rich glimmering ornamentation. All "enchantments" (*thelktēria*) were fashioned on it: *Philotēs* (sexual union) and *Himeros* (desire), whose power extends over the gods and the mortals. The term *thelktēria* refers to enchantments whose effects may calm, mollify, or appease, through dazzling, immobilization, loss of vigor, forgetfulness, or illusion (Carastro 2006, 215; see also 96–98). Here, Aphrodite's ribbon provides sensual pleasure above all. Indeed, the sight of the decorated ribbon and contact with the velvety cloth delights Hera: she smiles as she puts Aphrodite's gift under the folds of her dress.

The colorful pattern of the fabric contributes to the enchantment that kindles erotic desire. It thus symbolizes Aphrodite's power to entwine and entrap. For that matter, the patron goddess of sexual union is described, in a play by Euripides, as *poikilia*, because she "can to the utmost degree charm [*terpei*] or afflict the mortals" (E. *Fr.* 26 Nauck). Her abilities are also reflected in the richly adorned garment she wears in the opening of a Sapphic hymn, where the poetess implores the mighty goddess to kindle the loved one's desire. She is invoked as "*Poikilothronos* immortal Aphrodite, wile-weaving [*doloploke*] daughter of Zeus" (Sapph. *Fr.* 1, 1–2 Lobel-Page). The adjective *poikilothronos* probably refers to a dress adorned with patterns or floral appliques rather than to an ornate throne (Scheid and Svenbro 2003, 51–72). But Aphrodite's "variegation" can also be found elsewhere: it characterizes the sumptuous gold necklaces that she wears to seduce Anchises, which are described as being *pampoikiloi* (*h.Ven.* 88–89). Together with the other elements of the goddess's finery, they hold a strange power of fascination and

seduction: the Trojan is captivated. Later, another Trojan resorts to colored garments to arouse desire: Paris's richly colored outfit is said to have driven Helen out of her mind and torn her from her marital home. In *The Cyclops*, a satirical drama composed by Euripides around 430 BC, the coryphaeus tells Odysseus how Menelaus' wife fell for the Trojan prince's charms: "The traitor! She saw the variegated breeches on the man's legs and the gold necklace around his neck and went all aflutter after them, leaving behind that fine little man Menelaus!" (E. *Cyc*. 182–186, tr. D. Kovacs). The outfit worn by Paris, adorned like a woman, is very similar to the garments that Greeks associated with the Persian nobles during the Classical period. Variegation of the fabrics, colored breeches, and gold jewelry are, for example, characteristic of the warriors who surround Cyrus the young during military expeditions, according to Xenophon (*An*. 1.5.8). In Classical Athens, sartorial *poikilia* belongs to the world of women or serves as a *topos* to say, show, and think the foreign aspect of the Barbarians (Grand-Clément 2013), despite that fact that it may still serve as a sign of social distinction for the elite, as it did during the Archaic period (Villacèque 2008).

Pindar recounts that cunning Aphrodite developed other colorful devices to provoke erotic desire. Notably, she attached a bird, the wryneck (*iunx*), to a wheel, to create the powerful instrument that enchanted Medea and made her fall madly in love with Jason. But why did she choose that bird in particular to fashion the magic wheel? Precisely, according to Pindar, because of its *poikilia* (*P*. 4.214–216). And what exactly is the nature of the said *poikilia*? The wryneck is not a multicolored bird: it is not brightly colored. It does, however, possess a distinctive, extraordinarily complex plumage: the fine lines, spots, and subtle shades resulting from the patterns in its down in tones of gray, brown, and black look like tree bark or the scaly skin of a snake (Arist. *HA* 504a, 12–13). And this is not the only thing that makes the bird strange. Indeed, the wryneck can move its head in all directions while keeping its body still: this defensive behavior, used in case of danger, creates a sight that is both fascinating and troubling (Detienne 1972, 160–161). The "variegation" of the bird is thus connected to the undulating mobility that makes it a hybrid being, blurring the frontiers between the avian and the reptilian kingdom: *poikilia*, in this case, refers equally to a general physical appearance, including movement, *and* to a type of behavior – which, as we saw earlier, pertains to *mētis*.[10]

How *Poikilia* Works: Capturing the Eye and *Synaesthesia*

The things characterized as "variegated" are all animated and they all exert a power over the senses. Indeed, *poikilia* implies the possession of an intrinsic efficiency, one that plays on the experience of the senses. The anthropology of art can help us to understand the mechanisms that, according to the Greeks,

contribute to make variegation active. Gell has shown that art objects are characterized less by a static and universal form of beauty than by their "agency" and the intentionality they possess, which cause a kind of shock ("captivation") on the viewer. Artifacts especially play on their environment through their ornamentation. Through repetition and symmetry, "the motifs in decorative art often do seem to be engaged in a mazy dance in which our eyes become readily lost" (Gell 1998 , 76). This visual trick is what gives the observer an impression of animation, what intrigues and fascinates him. The captive gaze tries to unravel the mathematical and geometrical rules of the design's construction. But the search is endless: the complexity of infinite relations at play in the patterns condemns the cognitive operation to remain "unfinished." The patterns "slow perception down, or even halt it, so that the decorated object is never fully possessed at all, but is always in the process of becoming possessed" (Gell 1998, 81). Gell shows that the non-figurative decorations of artifacts possess not only a signification but also an active power. Thus, the *kolam*, which are the sinuous and symmetrical figures traced on doorsteps by women in India, remain hard to "read" in that it is difficult to apprehend the general principle guiding their pattern. They are similar to the Cretan labyrinth, meandering, made of always more twists and turns on the path leading from the entry to the center. This is intentional: in making the *kolam*, the women map out the voyage to the land of the dead, and their tracings aim to show the way at the same time as mislead the demons which must be repelled or trapped. Gell highlights the fact that the *kolam*'s aesthetic value can only be understood within the ritual and symbolic context which endows it with an apotropaic function. He also provides the example of the Melanesian Malakula, comparing the ephemeral drawings traced on the sand to the choreographies performed on other occasions: a dancer must make his way among the other dancers as if he were in a labyrinth of moving figures. This parallel obviously brings to mind the crane dance, designed by Daedalus and colorfully displayed on Achilles's shield. The same logic of crisscrossing and meandering presides over all the different manifestations of *poikilia*: "Drawing and music and dance tantalize our capacity to deal with wholes and parts, continuity and discontinuity, synchrony and succession" (Gell 1998, 95).

The agency of Greeks' *poikilia* thus stems from a "technology of enchantment" (Gell 1992): the fine play of colors and patterns intrigues and makes one wish to uncover the secret of its making. That is what lies behind the expression *thauma idesthai.* Wonder springs from the knowledge that beyond the apparent confusion there is order and rules, thought up by a skillful demiurge whose heroic or divine prototype could be Daedalus, Hephaestus, or Prometheus. The effect of *poikilia* induces an entrapment of the eye caused by the interplay of chromatic contrasts animating the patterns.

But *poikilia*'s mode of action does not pertain exclusively to the visual: it

calls into play other sensory perceptions, especially that of sound (LeVen 2013). Indeed, the musical echoes of *poikilia* are well known. Plato applies the term to refer to compositions that are characterized by rhythmic variety and a disjunction between the vocal and the instrumental scores (Wersinger 1993; 2001, 37). After him, the word is mainly used in reference to the new musical genre that is developing from the end of the fifth century BC onward in Athens and whose main features are music's domination over text, melodic versatility, metrical complexity, and theatricality (Wallace 2009). But such an implication of *poikilia* in the musical sphere is not an innovation of the Classical period. It can already be found in the image of the Hesiodic nightingale with its "*poikilos* throat" that I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. This example happens to show that the two fields of perception – the visual and that of sound – share close ties; the belief according to which the nightingale changes both its voice *and* its color bears witness to this (Arist. *HA* 632 b, 21): the two metamorphoses are impossible to dissociate.

It is in Pindar's work that this close relationship between color and music can be best observed, with the image of the "variegated hymn" (*humnon poikilon*), as in *Olympian* 6.86–87. The poet depicts himself weaving "a mottled headband" (*poikilon andēma*, *Fr*. 179, 1–2 Maehler) or bringing "a Lydian fillet [*mitran*] sprinkled with ringing notes" (*kanakhêda pepoikilmenan*, *N*. 8.14–16). Is this just a craft metaphor, comparing poetry with a finely decorated artifact, namely shining and colorful fabric? That would be a simplistic interpretation. Indeed, the association of the fabric and the poem, deeply rooted in Archaic thought,[11] is here connected to the materiality of the song, which has become a text written on a medium that can be sent to the winner and "touched" (cf. Pi. *N*. 5.41–42 and 8.46). However, the colorfulness of the poet's song is also and *just as much* a question of sound: it derives from the blending of the melody and the instrumental accompaniment. As a painter, the poet searches for the right combination of music, the proper sound arrangement: he is compared with a goldsmith who fashions "a mottled ornament that sings with words" (*poikilon kosmon audaenta logōn*, Pi. *Fr*. 194, 2 Maehler). Pindar, when composing the ode in honor of Hieron, in the Dorian mode, thus claims to have managed to "mix [*summeixai*] in due measure the many-voiced [*poikilogarun*] *phorminx*, the sound of pipes and the setting of words" (*O*. 3.8–9). As we can see, *poikilia* is close to one instrument in particular: the lyre (*phorminx*). The variegation of the object lies in the variety and richness of sound produced by the strings that vibrate together – and allows thus for the extending of the weaving metaphor. In the 4th *Nemean*, Pindar mentions a father "playing the lyre in a variegated way" (*poikilon kitharizōn*) in honor of his young son who was victorious in wrestling (*N*. 4.14). The adjective, used adverbially, refers to the range of the instrument. In another poem (*O*. 4. 2), Pindar explains that he has been sent by the *Hōrai*, the goddesses of seasons, "swirling to the sound of the colorful *phorminx*'s song" (*poikilophormingos aoidas*) – an image that once again

calls to mind the choir of youths dancing on Achilles's shield. In fact, the lyre *is* a colorful artifact, proceeding from the assembly of composite materials, as magnificent as an *agalma*. The Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* relates how the crafty young god made it from a turtle shell, a nice and spangled (*aiolon*) thing, and then gave it to Apollo as a gift. But the object is not only beautiful to behold: its clear sound is sweet to the ear. The instrument possesses enchanting and calming virtues: while listening to the young god play, Phoibos smiles and is taken by a "sweet desire" (*h.Merc.* 420 and 422). This "lover with a clear voice" also gladdens Zeus (*h. Merc.* 478 and 506). The bewitching lyre plays a *poikilos* melody, that is to say, one able to captivate the listeners and that has the same binding power as the Sirens' song (*Od.* 12.44; cf. Carastro 2006, 101–140). The object, made by a god endowed with *mētis*, is credited with intentionality; its "voice" catches the listener's attention. The same can be said of the beautiful and finely crafted (*daidalea*) *phorminx* played by Achilles, in the Achaeans' camp (*Il.* 9.186–187). The *poikilia* of the melody sung by the hero harmonizes with that of the instrument as to please and fulfill the audience (Lascoux 2006).

Flowers, whose relationship with *poikilia* has already been mentioned, possess similar virtues, appealing to all the senses and in particular to the sense of smell. Aristotle, who mentions the pleasure provided by their fragrance, takes it as a paradigmatic example of smells being intrinsically agreeable (*Eud. Eth*. 3.2.1231a). *Kharis* emanates from the combination of the bright colors, subtle scents, curved shapes, and velvety surface of the flowers. On vase-painting, flowery designs and ornaments suggest a pleasant olfactory environment, in addition to the delightful shine and shimmering of colors, and even a charming melody when they enhance a musical instrument or a musician's garment (Kei 2008, 2011).

Since the notion of *poikilia* expresses a state of completeness depending on a multi-sensory plenitude, can we consider that it pertains to synaesthesia? This is not possible if by the term synaesthesia we mean the special and idiosyncratic mode of perception studied by neurobiologists nowadays, characterized by a transfer between two sensory fields – the most frequent example being colored hearing. We can nevertheless consider the double meaning the Greeks gave *syn-aesthesis*, that is "the shared experience of multiple individuals" and "the whole set of perceptions that constitutes an animate being's encounter with the world or with itself" (Butler and Purves 2013, 2). The fact that *poikilia* belongs not only to the visual field, but also to sound, smell, touch, or even taste,[12] clearly shows that the Greeks did not necessarily divide the sensory experience into the different registers distinguished by Aristotle in his work. Their sensitivity to the surrounding world, their way of feeling, was different from ours. Archaic texts bear witness to a permeability of the sensory perceptions: colors, light, movement, patterns and shapes, sounds, textures, scents often combine. Porter highlights

to what extent "the Greeks and the Romans had the capacity to perceive pebbles or gemstones with the same sensibility as they did dance, music, or inscriptional writing, which is to say, in terms of common rhythmical properties, sheen, sound quality – in addition to the general run of aesthetic emotions organized by loftier value schemes (ethical and other). And because they did, we should acknowledge that the ancients were in fact virtuosos of *syn-aesthetics*" (Porter 2013, 20). This specificity of ancient aesthetics may be found in the rich inter-sensual, ambiguous, and complex images that are characteristic of Archaic poetry, as has been emphasized by Stanford, who draws a comparison with the work of Baudelaire (Stanford 1936, 57). If the interpenetration of sensations is manifest in the way the Greeks used color terms (see Irwin 1974 and Sassi in this volume), I think that this is the notion of *poikilia* which best expresses the satisfying richness of sensory connections.[13]

On the other hand, *syn-aesthesis* also relates to a shared experience, within ritual and social contexts that bring a whole group together. A collective practice such as the banquet, for example, takes place in a setting that is particularly rich in sensory stimulations. The manipulation of vases during the *symposion* contributes to animating the paintings designed on them. The play of graphics and color tones resulting from the ceramists' work is not at odds with the riddles and contests of eloquence played by the guests, quite the contrary; they fuel conversations and can even be the site of negotiations among the aristocrats who are searching for a new place in Athenian society (Neer 2002, 14–23). And beyond being a canvas for discussion, the *poikilia* of the painted vases is in itself eloquent and may even "speak." Indeed, some Archaic painters succeed in materializing sound in a visual form, as on a *skyphos* from the Chazen Museum in Wisconsin: thanks to a skillful pictorial composition, the viewer can almost "hear" the poet playing music and singing (Porter 2013, 23–25). We can imagine that fabric – often perfumed and glossy – must have played a similar role to that of vases. Its fine ornamentation may stimulate imagination. Let us add that weaving is not a silent activity: rhythmic songs must have contributed to the necessary coordinating of strokes on the loom, in this collective activity (Vickers 1999, 15).

This brings us back to another aspect of poikilic agency, linked in a way to the secret of its origin: The process of creation lies in bringing heterogeneous elements together, as a unified whole, while they retain their own nature and keep interacting in a dynamic fashion. It is this tension between the meticulousness of details and the total effect that lies at the heart of *poikilia*, as suggested by Nagy's commentary on a passage of the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 19.518–525): "The paradox of the metaphor is that the many and the various become the single and the uniform – and yet there is supposedly no loss in the multiplicity and variety of the constituent parts" (Nagy 1996, 66). The characteristic of *poikilon* is to create strong connections, to bind dissimilar

elements. Thus, the variegated knot that Circe teaches Odysseus guarantees the inviolability of the baggage the hero is about to carry off on his trip (*Od.* 8.447–448): the subtle meshing of the leather bonds created a powerful enchantment, probably reinforced by the use of incantations.

In Greek thought, the intertwining of colored threads on fabric mirrors the interlocking of social groups within the city (Scheid and Svenbro 2003, 17–35). As they make the saffron and purple *peplos* for Athena each year, and weave on it (*poikillō*) scenes representing the fight against the Titans (E. *IT*. 223–225), the young Athenian *arrhēphoroi* renew the unity and cohesion of the community. Such is also the function of the *nomoi*, aimed at establishing common rules and avoiding *stasis*. Thus, for Pittacus (quoted by Diod. 9.27.4), the colorful wood symbolizes the supreme authority of the city's written law, which is displayed on painted notice boards, at the heart of the public space, to guarantee *eunomia* and harmony. It is thence easy to understand why Polybius alludes to the variegation of the Roman Republican *politeia* (Plb. 6.3.3): the intricate relationship between the different institutions relying on the play of counter-powers leads to a sort of political equilibrium, not ever fixed but rather always in tension.

However, *poikilia* does not always assure *eukosmia*. Thus, the mottled coat (*himation poikilon*) of democracy is despised by Plato, because he judges it to be garish, ill-assorted, and superficial: he considers it a distasteful patchwork, barely good enough to fascinate easily impressionable women and children (*Rep*. 8.557c–558c). *Poikilia* in this way appears as the very antithesis of the moderation and simplicity suited to political governance, as sliding toward tyranny, the feminine, and excess (Rosenstock 1994). The image of the *himation poikilon* allows Plato to condemn the spectacular aspect of Athenian *politeia*: the philosopher uses it to denounce the constitutional variegation of the democratic regime and its deceptiveness, as well as the versatility of the Athenian *demos*, likened to the theatergoing public (Villacèque 2010). Plato also draws on the language of medicine. Opposed to *haploun*, which embodies sincerity, good measure, and healthiness, *poikilia* is on the side of imbalance and malfunction. It pertains to the cosmetic, the art of embellishing appearances, as opposed to gymnastics that make the body vigorous and healthy (Pl. *Rep.* 3.404e 3–5). It is true that in the Hippocratic corpus, the variegated (*poikilos* or *polukhroos*) is symptomatic of a pathological state (Villard 2002, 50–51, 55).

An Evolution in the Taste for *Poikilia*

Plato's harsh judgment in the *Republic* is indicative of a shift in the perception of *poikilia* during the Classical period. It may be due to a change of the moral and political paradigm: the model of the Homeric hero, fighting for his own *kleos* and resorting to any device he can, is replaced by the new ethics of the

polis that requires that individuals no longer "cheat" and that they obey the rules of the community (Rinaudo 2009 , 58). But the development of philosophical theory about sensory perceptions may also have played a significant role. *Poikilia* suffers from the disrepute attributed to aesthetic seduction, which works on the eye rather than on the mind, and deceives, because it diverts from "true" knowledge. One might add that it belongs to an aesthetic model now associated with the Barbarians, in particular those from Asia who, since the Greco-Persian wars, have become enemies par excellence.

The ambivalence in judgments regarding *poikilia* in literary sources of the Classical period echoes the contemporary evolution of certain craft practices. Indeed, the taste for ornamentation, characteristic of Archaic period artifacts, gives way to a kind of aesthetic austerity (Hurwit 1985, 23). The change appears in the early fifth century BC, with the triumph of what art historians call the severe style. Polychrome decoration is simplified and becomes more discreet; complicated geometrical patterns tend to disappear. Of course, this evolution is in no way uniform or general; it does not affect the whole of Greek art. Yet we can take the example of vase-painting, with the shift from black figures to red figures. Juxtapositions of monochrome flat tints are replaced by subtle gradations of the dilute glaze, thus blurring the contrastive effects that were so characteristic of the black-figure technique. By means of a thin brush, the hue can now be modulated according to the thickness of the line. A similar trend leading toward less variegation seems to occur on the painted decoration of marble statues (Brinkmann 2004, 65–66), though regarding bronze sculpture, the taste for inclusions of brightly colored substances does not diminish. As a matter of fact, the acrolithic technique continues to develop: chryselephantine statues become more and more imposing and display more and more *poikilia* – but they are reserved for the gods (Stewart 1990, 40). As for the painters of the Classical period, they more often resort to the blending of colors and subtle transitions, in order to create effects of chiaroscuro. But again, the practice of juxtaposing bright, unmixed colors does not disappear: the two types of techniques sometimes coexist, as the decoration of the Hellenistic funerary steles clearly demonstrates (Rouveret 1989, 253).

The fondness for *poikilia*, so characteristic of Archaic Greek aesthetics, reappears in other forms during the Hellenistic and Roman periods (see, for example, in the Greek novels: Briand 2006). Hellenistic literature adapts, reinterprets, and transforms Archaic lyric poetry through a complex process of textual, cultural, and creative reception (Acosta-Hughes 2010). Graham Zanker, in the present volume, points out that such a play between innovation and the revival of old models pertains to *poikilia*, in the sense of its being a skillful way of adapting tradition to a new social, cultural, and political setting. For instance, Apollonius of Rhodius negotiates between Homeric

traditional epic form and contemporary aesthetics (Nishimura-Jensen 1998). The long and meticulous description of the coat that Athena finely wove for Jason (A.R. 1.711–767) renews the *ekphrasis* genre that stems from the Homeric tradition: the metals of Hephaestus' shield are replaced by the red and purple shades of the fabric, making for a new kind of polychrome spectacle. Here again, the *poikilia* of the last scene provokes wonder and blurs sensory boundaries: the viewer can even *hear* the ram speaking to Phrixus.

During Hellenistic and Roman times, the development of mosaic adds a new type of technique to the arts of *poikilia*. The same can be said of the use of veined marbles to adorn Rome's buildings: the inlays of brightly colored stones show the expanse of the empire. Pliny and Seneca, who both associate marble veneering or marble plating with the optical illusions that create "false impressions, interfering with what both considered the proper objectives of the senses" (Bradley 2009, 93), condemn such ostentation (e.g. Sen. *Ep*. 115.8–9). These practices pertain to the *versicolor* – a Roman category that does not exactly match the Greeks' *poikilia*, even if it shares some of its features: optical illusion, the trap of impressions and deceit, artifice, uncertainty. *Versicolor* rather designates the manifold hues and the iridescence that the Greeks used to associate with purple (*porphureos*). Seneca's rainbow, characterized by its *varietas colorum*, thus constitutes "a smart example of the visual trickery to which Roman eyes could be exposed" (Bradley 2009, 44). Cicero, revisiting and adapting the Platonic tradition, opposes the frank, natural, and uniform *color* of the orator's discourse to the ornamentation and theatricality that characterize the sophist's artificially colored eloquence: the latter "use far-fetched metaphors and arrange them as painters do with the variety of colors" (*ut pictores varietatem colorum*, Cic. *Or*. 65). By summoning up the image of the *pictor*, Cicero draws on a category that is related to the Greek *poikilia*, as the etymology testifies, since the word *pictura* comes from the same root as *poikilia* (Pierre 2009, 181). Such a tradition, being hostile to excessive and inappropriate coloring, finds an echo in the Plinian condemnation of the pictorial practices that rely on the use of expensive and tawdry *colores floridi* (Brecoulaki 2006b).

Herein lies the seed of the association between variegation and vulgarity, so strongly entrenched in modern Western thought – and this "chromophobia" (Batchelor 2001) is responsible for the nineteenth-century unwillingness to admit that Greek art was brightly colored. Yet, artists from Victorian England, such as Whistler or Symonds, pertaining to what is called the Aesthetic movement, fittingly draw on the Greek poetic and artistic tradition to reinvent and promote a variegated and sensual Greece, quite different from the neoclassicist ideal. Highly sensitive to inter-sensory connections and analogies, these admirers of Baudelaire assert a form of "supersensuousness" that revives the Archaic Greek *poikilia* in a fresh way (Ribeyrol 2013, 159–166).

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FURTHER READING

Due to its multifariousness, the concept of *poikilia* is mentioned in many studies, but few of them really tackle the issue. The only publication entirely devoted to it is the collection edited by Berardi, Lisi, and Micalella (2009), which provides an up-to-date bibliography on the subject. Papers written by various specialists, mainly philologists, cover several fields of inquiry (poetry, philosophy, rhetoric, politics, medicine, music), but the perspective remains mostly a literary one. The introductory remarks by Micalella offer a good starting point, with some further reading and an overview of the diverse contributions. Most of them are dedicated to one work or one author belonging to the Archaic and Classical periods (Pindar, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, to cite but a few), with a few insights into Hellenistic and Roman eras (for example, with Josephus and Proclus). They show in particular that *poikilia* is a key notion for understanding the arts of rhetoric and the principles at work in poetic composition, as the Greeks conceived them, from the Archaic period onwards. Rinaudo (2009) (relying on a previous and more detailed work, Rinaudo 1994) focuses on the evolution of the semantics of *poikilos*, from Homer to Aristotle. It provides thus a good survey, in spite of her tendency to underestimate the role played by colors in the process. Wallace (2009), who deals with the implication of *poikilia* in the musical sphere, may be usefully complemented by LeVen (2013), on the multisensory nature of *poikilia*.

Another substantial though quite different approach to the concept of *poikilia* can be found in the seminal study by Detienne and Vernant (1974) about *mêtis* (English translation, 1991), supplemented by Frontisi-Ducroux (2000) on *daidalea*. Both these volumes adopt a more anthropological perspective, as does the last chapter of Grand-Clément (2011), devoted to an inquiry on the semantics of the adjective *poikilos* as a means of better understanding the Greek Archaic sensitivity to colors. This study, bringing together literary and archeological data, highlights the strong connection existing between objects full of *poikilia* and the notions of excellence, beauty, seduction, and pleasure in Archaic culture and aesthetics. As far as the field of art and craftsmanship is concerned, two recent studies shed new light on *poikilia*, in a different but quite complementary way: Cohen (2008) and Neer (2002). Both deal with sixth- and fifth-century Athenian vase-painting, but the first one focuses on the various techniques used to achieve variegated effects on ceramics, whereas the second establishes a link between the aesthetic values of ornamentation and aristocratic ethics in Greek cities.

NOTES

1 *Poikilia* occurs first in the works of Euripides, Xenophon, and in the Hippocratic texts (e.g. Hp. *Epid*. 1.8); Plato uses it very often in his dialogues.

2 The epithet *po-ki-ro-nu-ka*, "with variegated edgings (?)," qualifies some textiles stored in the Mycenaean palaces (Nosch 2004, 32).

3 See Grand-Clément (2011, 439–447). On the close relationship between snakes and *poikilia*, see Sancassano (1997, 188–196).

4 Aristotle contrasts animal skin, which may be "dappled," with human skin (*GA*.784a 23). When human skin is "dappled," it may be due to a disease or to tattooing – a foreign practice according to the Greeks, who associated it with the Thracians (Xen. *An*. 5.4.32; Diod. 14.30.7).

5 We shall bear in mind that there is a significant difference of meaning between the two words: the first alludes to a profusion of colors, whereas the second refers to chromatic variation and instability.

6 The word *skiagraphia* has been variously interpreted (see Brecoulaki 2006a, 70 n.5); here, we rely on the definition provided by Rouveret (1989, 53–54) and Keuls (1978, 72–87), that is to say, an impressionistic technique, using divisions of bright colors and relying on the phenomenon of optical color fusion.

7 For an overview, see Barber (1991). The embroidered linen from Koropi and the gold-decorated purple cloth from the Vergina Great Tumulus are among the main finds (Vickers 1999, 69, fig. 22; 57, fig. 7).

8 Among the many studies devoted to the notion of *agalma*, Gernet (1982) remains a reference.

9 For example, A. *Pr*. 24; *poikilma* and *poikilia* may be applied directly to the sky (e.g. E. *Hel*. 1096; Pl. *R*. 529c; 529d).

10 The *poluplokos* octopus is another animal full of *mētis*, because its skin (*khrōs*) takes the color of the rock where it settles (cf. Theogn. 217; Detienne and Vernant 1974, 45–48). Such clever behavior must be a model for the aristocrat in the city, according to Theognis who recommends his nephew to adopt a similar variegated *ethos* (Neer 2002, 14–23).

11 On the link between *huphainō* and *humnos* (lit. "the fabric of song"), see Nagy (1996, 64).

12 Let us recall that in modern Greek *poikilia* has a tasty flavor: the word designates an assortment of the traditional *meze* dishes that can be eaten as

appetizers in many taverns.

13 See LeVen's conclusion: in Archaic and Classical times, *poikilos* "captures, in the description of an animal, an artifact or a sound, the notion that the luscious patterns in a bird's feathers, the wrought motives of a shield, or the many-voiced and swift-moving notes of a lyre cause an aesthetic reaction of rapt pleasure through the senses" (LeVen 2013, 238).

CHAPTER 28
Wonder

Christine Hunzinger

The notion of wonder (*thauma*) occupies a marginal place – scattered, to be sure, but still peripheral – in works dealing with the history of ancient aesthetics.[1] In his work on the terminology of ancient art criticism, Pollitt views the term *thaumastos* as typifying popular judgment, an enthusiastic non-specialist's simple formulation, connected especially to the perception of three characteristics: realistic representation, creation bordering on the magical or miraculous, and the art object's precious and costly look (1974, 63–66, 189–190). In contrast, recent works by Neer assign *thauma* a central place in the history of Archaic and Classical art. In his opinion, one way to understand the development of Greek sculpture is as the quest for this effect of wonder, just as it appears in Archaic descriptions, with its fundamental characteristics, namely, brilliance, dazzle, and the object's paradoxical duality and otherness.

The marginality of *thauma* in works about ancient aesthetics is surely due to the nebulousness of this essentially protean notion. For *thauma* has an extensive referential range. The concept lacks an essential property, that of being circumscribed within a determined field – to cite Pindar, there are "numerous wonders" (*Olympian Odes* 1.28: *thaumata polla*). Yet mention of the wonder a work of art arouses regularly appears in ancient literature, as a recurring expression of an aesthetic judgment. Recall the wonder inspired by the shield of Achilles, as Hephaestus foretells (*Iliad* 18.466–467), the labyrinth that provokes the Herodotean narrator's infinite astonishment (2.148), or even Bdelycleon's advice to his father, in Aristophanes's *Wasps* (1215), on proper guest etiquette – admire the tapestries! Then there are the oft-repeated expressions of aesthetic wonder in descriptions of works of art, from the Hellenistic Age to the Roman period, of which this epigram on the depiction of Heracles and a doe provides a sample: "What shall I admire first, what next, with my mind's eye and my actual eyes, in the artistry here revealed in man or doe?" (*Palatine Anthology* 16.96).

But this experience of the work of art as something extraordinary is only one of a multiplicity of sights equally considered *thaumata*, but all quite different, as various as the Cyclops of the *Odyssey* (9.190), a fine cheese in Semonides (fr. 23 West), a philosophical paradox, or a thousand other phenomena touched with a startling or marvelous quality.

One of the reasons for this tenuous position of *thauma* in aesthetic thought could also be attributed to the ambivalence of the emotion it designates, since

the diversity of the postures of the subject who is in the grip of *thaumazein*, ranging from hermeneutical astonishment to stupid amazement, is superimposed upon the multiplicity of referents of *thauma*. This ambiguity reaches its zenith in Platonic thought, where *thaumazein* is defined not only as the origin and very principle (*arché*) that completely underpins philosophical reflection (*Theaetetus* 155d3 – cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b12), but also as open-mouthed astonishment before sophistic charlatans, *thaumatopoioi*, who engage in tricks of rhetorical prestidigitation and manipulate ideas as if they were mere marionettes (*Sophist* 268d). Likewise, in the *Hippocratic Collection*, the medical authors praise wonder when admiring rational skill but condemn it when laymen marvel at spectacular and dangerous cures, solely conceived to astound. The representation of *thauma* in Greek literature generally develops down two paths that bear on the appropriateness of this emotion, between astonishment as a vehicle of inquiry, and blind stupidity: Is it legitimate to wonder? And at what object? This duality is not specific to Greek *thaumazein* but is at the center of the philosophical debate on astonishment (Hepburn 1980).

This ambivalence also affects the *thauma* that the work of art induces: wonder at art's representational power is either considered as the completely reliable access to another world, which presents itself with all the characteristics of a living reality and incites a constantly renewed visual pleasure, or it is perceived as a lure, *apatē* and *dolos*, a snare for a suspicious mind, whose efforts to extricate itself from the snare's devices expose the artifact's mode of existence as the mode of "as if." This twofold evaluation of aesthetic wonder begins with the descriptions of art in the Archaic corpus and subsequently runs through reflections about art that constantly recur on this question of wonder's appropriateness, on a "proper usage" of *thaumazein*, notably in Plato and Aristotle, right up to the Roman period. Then a new character appears on the intellectual scene: the educated man who knows how to wonder at what is deserving and how to translate his emotion into precisely appropriate words.

Thaumazein: A Modality of Looking

Once it is designated as *thauma*, the work of art is first defined as spectacle (Mette 1961 ; Prier 1989). In most Archaic occurrences of the word, *thauma* is something seen and inherent in sensory appearances. The look it arouses involves a particular modality of visual perception. Vendryes, in a study of verbs expressing the idea of seeing in Indo-European languages, has distinguished two types of process (1952, 116): an active apprehending, a voluntary act originating with the subject agent (*I look*), and a passive perception during which an external event imposes itself on the subject (*I see*). As if dealing with a table comprising two columns and two lines, this initial distinction can be completed with the distinction between a lasting

vision and a fleeting perception. As Vendryes remarks, Greek ignores the case of a passive perception that lasts – a case, he thinks, inherently paradoxical: the moment perception continues, the act entails an intent. The author continues (1952, 118): "It is hard to understand how a language would use a durative form expressing vision as 'perception.'"[2] Yet it is precisely this aspect that the verb *thaumazō* takes in certain of its ancient instances (*Iliad* 13.11): a contemplation that endures, accompanied by a fascination for the spectacle that captivates the subject and places him, more or less temporarily, in a situation of receptor, still and silent.

There is no question of a neutral gaze: the subject's emotional reaction accompanies this process of sensory perception, and it subsumes a certain number of categories which modern languages distinguish: wonder, admiration, astonishment, etc. These emotional nuances align themselves differently along an axis that opposes, at its two extremes, positive admiration, which does not diminish when the novelty of the phenomenon ceases to astonish, and the astonishment that sometimes borders on feelings of revulsion and scandal. Or think also of two sloping curves, the one charting utter happiness, encounter with a desired object, the other utter unhappiness, when the extraordinary phenomenon disappoints the subject's expectations.

Resulting from the conjunction of a perceived object and the perception that the subject trains upon it, *thauma* is neither an objective quality of the world nor a feeling separable, for the subject, from the perception of an "outside" – what Greek depicts, like the English "wonder," through the use of an identical term for "something amazing" and "feeling of amazement." Object of a subjective emotion marking "the emergence or occurrence of the other" ("l'avènement ou l'événement de l'autre") and the "mourning for the self as an independent entity" ("le deuil de soi comme unité autarcique") (Irigaray 1984, 75), *thauma* is situated in this "in-between," external to the being perceiving it but constructed by his subjective perception.[3]

Now, this perception entails the simultaneous awareness of two antithetical phenomena (what Neer 2010, 66, calls "perception of a synaptic joint"), of a gap between two poles, of a paradoxical duality. Thus, despite its referential diversity, the concept's unity resides in the awareness of a paradox and the acknowledgment of a *gap*: purely quantitative or qualitative, intellectual, with reference to an expectation, a norm, etc. Veritable epiphany of the impossible, *thauma* rends the ordinary or expected fabric of phenomena and so reclaims the entire realm of the "extra-ordinary."

The Specificity of Aesthetic *Thauma*

If this polarity is necessary and consubstantial in all *thaumata*, one may note, amidst the infinite variety of spectacles apt to arouse wonder, sorts of "collections" or series of *thaumata* endowed with recurrent features –

accompanying, contingent characteristics conducive to a cartography of marvelous phenomena. The work of art constitutes one of these series, with its own "ingredients" (to use the expression of Neer 2010 , 61: "key ingredients of Greek wonder").

A frequent technique of art object description particularly accentuates this series phenomenon by surrounding *ekphrasis* with mention of the wonder the object produces, whether it is a comment by the external narrator on the spectacle's wondrous quality ("a wonder to behold," *thauma idesthai*) or a depiction of the wonder experienced by a character within the narrative. In both cases, reception of something marvelous within the text qualifies it explicitly as such and has the effect of guiding the reaction of the external listener or reader: the appearance of the marvelous within the fiction tends to put his reception on the right track and provoke the same effect on him.

This orientation for how to receive the work, a leitmotif of *ekphrasis*, occupies structurally two key places, its beginning and end. The mention of *thauma* provoked by the object constitutes the point of attachment and insertion for the descriptive passage in the *Shield of Heracles*, at verses 140 and 318 (sixth century BC?); for Theocritus (third century BC), *Idylls* 1. 56, where the cup offered to Thyrsis is described as *thaēma* at a pause in the description; for the *Rape of Europa* 38 by Moschus (second century BC), where the term *thauma* allows the poet to embark upon the description of the basket Europa carries; and so on, to Nonnus of Panopolis (fifth century AD), *Dionysiaca* 25.386 (shield of Dionysus), or the rhetorical exercises included in the corpus of Libanius (fourth century AD), which offer this concluding formula: "It is a wonder to behold and a crime to bury in silence" (*Progymnasmata* 12.23.11).

This descriptive technique is revelatory about the temporality proper to aesthetic wonder: constantly renewed, it is never exhausted, and it accompanies aesthetic feeling as long as that lasts. It is precisely the temporality of *thaumazein* that is at the heart of the question about the emotion's appropriateness, whose fleetingness may be a sign of intelligence, when the *thauma* disappears with understanding of the phenomenon. After the shorter or longer period in which the mind is seized with amazement, either questioning arises, which resolves the paradox, or habit does, which dispels the initial sense of something extraordinary. As Le Goff puts it, "One of the marks of the marvelous is its instability, like a dream; one awakens from the marvelous because his cognitive function dissolves it in a puff" (1978, 84: "l'une des caractéristiques du merveilleux est son instabilité, comme le rēve; on s'éveille du merveilleux, parce que sa fonction cognitive le dissout en fumée"). The god Thaumas (Hesiod, *Theogony* 265–269), a shifting force of the sea, embodies this instability in myth. He belongs to an ambiguous lineage, between the beneficent powers of the daughters of Nereus and the monstrous line born of Phorkys and Keto. Wed to Electra ("the shining one"),

he is the father of Iris, the fleet messenger, and of the Harpies, “Storm-swift” and “Swift-flier,” turbulent winds who, with lightning speed, cast confusion on the sea’s vast void.[4] But aesthetic *thauma* escapes this fleetingness. A *thauma* springing from a work of art does not vanish, even after the phenomenon is understood.

To pick out the individual ingredients of aesthetic *thauma*, it is worth pausing over Homeric and Hesiodic descriptions – the shield of Achilles in Book 18 of the *Iliad*, the brooch of Odysseus in Book 19 of the *Odyssey*, the creation of Pandora in the *Theogony*, the description of the shield of Heracles inserted into the Hesiodic corpus – because they can be seen as a laboratory where lasting representations of aesthetic wonder are developed.

The object’s *texture* is what first catches the eye. In a *qualitative* separation from the ordinary, the art object announces itself by the exceptional nature of its materials: bronze, tin, gold, silver, and blue enamel on Achilles’s shield (*Iliad* 18.474, 564); the gold of Odysseus’s brooch (*Odyssey* 19.226, 230) and of Pandora’s diadem in the *Theogony* (578); the ivory, electrum, steel, and *titanos* (gypsum or smalt), in addition to the metals already mentioned, on the shield of Heracles. These rare materials foster admiration for the object’s preciousness and high cost, its *poluteleia* (Pollitt 1974, 216). A fragment of the Aristotelian philosopher and music theorist Aristoxenes of Tarentum (fourth century BC) sums up the status of this “material” property of the wondrous: “All these things produce pleasure of some sort, provided that the basic material consists of something human nature admires. This is what happens with gold and silver, in short, with everything of which the eye is fond” (Athenaeus, *Learned Banqueters* 12.64, 545e6–8, tr. Loeb, modified).

Thauma also proceeds from the object’s brilliance, its thousand points of light dazzling the eye (Frontisi-Ducroux 1975, 68ff.): the flashing radiance of the armor Thetis brings (*Iliad* 18.617), the sparkle of the shield of Heracles (142–43). When light sources crop up in depicted scenes, the dazzled eye of the observer perceives the convergence of two radiances: the sparkle of the metal itself, the medium of depiction, and the brilliance of the object in the world depicted, like the sparkling torches at the marriage ceremonies portrayed on the two shields (*Iliad* 18.492, *Shield* 275). This brilliance has the characteristic of dissolving into a thousand different rays. The adjective *panaiolon* qualifying the shield of Heracles right from the first verse of the description (139) designates these multiple and mobile shafts. This particular character of *thauma*’s brilliance is seen again in the wonder Odysseus experiences among the Phaeacians at a dance entertainment: the hero admires the dancers’ rapid and scintillating (*marmarugas*) footwork (*Odyssey* 8.265).

Wonder also arises in the face of multiplicity, in the paradox which the coexistence of the one and the multiple presents. The object, on its single and circumscribed surface, offers numerous depictions and striking effects in a variegated mix that suggests to the eye an infinite diversity. Examples are the

animals which abound on Pandora's diadem (*Theogony* 583), the swans who shriek over the Ocean depicted on the shield of Heracles (316), and the other *daidala* that proliferate on the two bucklers (*Iliad* 18.482ff.; *Shield* 315). This paradox is pushed to the extreme in subsequent descriptions of gems and rings, objects whose tiny surface encompasses depiction of an entire world, for example, the gem descriptions by Posidippus of Pella (third century BC), which play upon the contrast between two scales, the smallness of the object itself and the grandeur of the world represented thereon (Porter 2010, 485), or the description of a ring of graven amethyst with its thousand details of a countryside, including a young shepherd watching his flock, in Heliodorus (*Aethiopica* 5.14; third to fourth century AD). In another setting, musical and choreographic performance, the spectacle featuring young girls from Delos, as described in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (146–164), provokes a *thauma* showing a similar conjunction of the one and the multiple. Described here by the use of the verb *sunarēren* (from the same root as the word *harmonia*), it is a perfect accord of multiple voices and different languages such that each listener can still recognize his own individually: "Also they can imitate the tongues of all men, the babel of languages; each would say that he himself were singing, so well-attuned is their beauteous song" (163–164, tr. Loeb, modified). The harmony created in this moment of grace, during the festivals honoring Delian Apollo, is evident in the dizziness that takes hold of each individual as he listens to the Delian girls and imagines that he is hearing his own tongue issuing from the maidens' mouths. In other contexts, the paradox of the coexistence of the one and the multiple can reside in a technical detail: in the *Histories* of Herodotus (3.47), the corselet of the Egyptian king Amasis, decorated with numerous embroidered figures, creates a wondrous effect on the eye of the beholder: its fibers, all extremely fine, are each formed of multiple strands, all clearly distinguishable, such that 360 strands make a single fiber. Finally, this paradoxical conjunction is not confined to the sphere of aesthetic wonder but is a recurrent trait of *thauma* in other realms of the wondrous – descriptions of monsters or intellectual paradoxes, and so forth. Thus, the strangeness of the monster Typhoeus in the *Theogony* lies in his emitting of multiple sounds and varied voices that constantly change (829–835); in a passage of the Aristotelian *On the World*, the world is presented as a wondrous conjunction of opposites, comparable to the equally amazing combination of multiple entities forming an individual city (396a33ff.).

The character of *poikilia* affects the varied aspects of the work of art – such as the skill of Hephaestus, which consists in *poikillein*, in engraving a thousand different scenes on the object's surface (*Iliad* 18.590) and the spotted fawn on the brooch of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 19.228). Applied to something skillfully crafted, the word refers to the "visual complexity" (Neer 2002, 33; Frontisi-Ducroux 1975, 69–71) the eye beholds in an object whose surface, far from presenting itself to the gaze as flat and uniform, without detail or relief to catch attention, diffracts into a multiplicity of patterns, flashes, or colors.

Poikilia thus denotes what the eye perceives as motley and multicolored, with light's rippling effects (see Grand-Clément in this volume). *Thauma*'s inherent paradox still proceeds here from the contradiction between the one and the multiple, but it also springs from the changing character of visual impressions. This, in turn, touches on the *thauma* of metamorphosis and the paradoxical coexistence of the self and the other. So Plato glosses *poikilon*, in a passage of the *Republic* (568d), as "that which never remains the same," the antithesis of simplicity, *haploun* (*Theaetetus* 146d). This *poikilia* may be the result of different techniques: metalworking (*Iliad* 18.590; *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 89: necklaces in wrought gold that shine like the moon and arouse Anchises' wonder); cloth embroidery (*Odyssey* 15.104–108), as well as painting (Pindar, *Nemean Odes* 10.35–36: *pampoikiloi* vases). The term connotes a specialization in the realm of painting; hence the name *Stoa Poikilē* for the covered portico in Athens, the "picture gallery" which famously sheltered a depiction of the battle of Marathon by the painter Micon in the fifth century BC (scholiast on Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 679). In a literary work, it is the stylistic figures that produce this effect of *poikilia*, the figures conceived as so many reliefs applied to a neutral material (Isocrates, *Evagoras* 9). But this medley is not necessarily the product of a technique. *Poikilia* can also designate an animal's spotted hide (a panther in *Iliad* 10.30; a fawn in Euripides, *Bacchae* 249; a serpent in Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 4.249). Finally, as metaphor, *poikilia* depicts inventive, supple, and fluid trickery (Detienne and Vernant 1978, 27–43): the tricks of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 3.163), of Prometheus (*Theogony* 511, 521), and of Hermes (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 155, 514); a crafty individual (Aristophanes, *Knights* 758); the protean character of the octopus that adapts to its milieu (Theognis 212–217: *poikilon ēthos*); the changing and unfathomable twists of divine plans (Euripides, *Helen* 711). This rippling mixture of *poikilia* remains a recurring trait in the descriptions of marvels. The Herodotean narrator thus describes his aesthetic experience in the Egyptian labyrinth: "The baffling and intricate [*poikilōtatoi*] passages from room to room and from court to court were an endless wonder [*thōma murion*] to me, as we passed from a courtyard into rooms, from rooms into galleries, from galleries into more rooms, and thence into yet more courtyards" (*Histories* 2.148, de Selincourt/Penguin trans.). Plato similarly associates *thauma* and *poikilia* when he mentions the marvelous character of the changing motions, infinite in number, of the orbiting stars (*Timaeus* 39d2). Yet, following a slippage parallel to the slide toward *poikilia*'s metaphorical meaning, such admiration can be transformed into credulous amazement when confronted with the thousand resources of inventive trickery. Thus, a verse of Pindar deals with multiple marvels passing human acceptance: "stories are embellished beyond the true account and deceive by means of embroidered [*poikilois*] lies" (*Olympian Odes* 1.28–29, tr. Loeb, modified). The ranges of medley, marvel, and deceit intertwine.

The art object presents yet another essential paradox to the astonished gaze,

the coexistence of the inanimate and the animate: inert material supports depictions endowed with life, as mobile, vocal, and noisy as living creatures. Description stresses the jumble of warring categories – the inert and the lively, the dumb and the vocal, as frequent comparisons of depicted figures with living beings show (*Iliad* 18.539; *Shield of Heracles* 189, 244). Note also the comparison of metallic animals, by nature voiceless, to "living beings with voices" on Pandora's diadem (*Theogony* 584). Observations of sounds and movements abound in these *ekphraseis*, where the fixed image turns into a full narrative to convey the impression of life suggested by the depiction. This paradox of animate matter finds a remarkable expression in the close-up, describing land being ploughed, on the shield of Achilles (*Iliad* 548–49) or in that on the brooch of Odysseus (*Odyssey* 19.226–231). Oscillation between the grammatical genders of the animate and inanimate conveys the unexpected wedding of the metallic and the mobile. In Hesiod's description of Pandora's creation, this play on genders is meaningful. The paradoxical object, totally defined from the start by the oxymoron *kalon kakon* ("beauteous evil"), stays neuter throughout its fabrication and disguising (570, 572, 585). The feminine gender only occurs when spectators look, at the exact moment when admirers see in this thing a sexual being (587). The creature is feminized the minute the snare of fabrication comes into play, which the *thauma* of the viewers validates.

Later texts, amidst the play of reworkings, vary in a thousand ways these themes of animating matter. Here are some examples, only a few reference points in a long poetic history: Theocritus, *Idylls* 1.41–42, a detail on a cup represents an old fisherman whom one imagines seeing as he struggles to drag his net; or the comments of women on the liveliness that animates statues in Herondas (third century BC), *Mimes* 4.33–34, 64–65, 73. The author of an epigram on the statue of a dancer imagines that the dancer he is looking at endured the same fate as Niobe, turned to stone: the only way to interpret the paradox of suspended life, of fixed movement (*Palatine Anthology* 11.253). The descriptions of rhetors, in the collections of *ekphraseis* attributed to Philostratus and Callistratus (second to third, and fourth century AD), reiterate the same paradoxical traits: a pictorial representation startles because it "it is full of sounds" (Philostratus the Younger 10.17), a statue surpasses all wonders because its compositional material displays signs of pleasure and the bronze expresses emotions (Callistratus 8.3). Finally, in a description of a painting by Choricius of Gaza (sixth century AD), the narrator, taken with the lifelike illusion, speaks to Medea, a character represented in the painting, then breaks the illusion thus: "But what is my illusion? Why do I allow the painter's art to deceive me? I thought I had life before my eyes; I have only a painting" (*Description of a Painting which was in Gaza*, ed. Boissonade, p. 161, ll. 28ff.).

Wonder before the work of art is therefore born of perception's dual and

contradictory character, of the tension provoked by what partakes of oxymoron, the conjoining in one object of antitheses. This abiding structure in the phenomenon of aesthetic wonder, moreover, does not preclude multiple variations in descriptions of artistic marvels across the ages and authors. Pursuing in detail the diverse twists given to *thauma* in descriptions of artistic works would be tantamount to tracing the contours in an evolution of taste: a *danse macabre* on the *Shield of Heracles*; monumentality, grandeur, and impressive cost in Herodotus; geometry and symmetry in Xenophon, whether the paradise garden of the Younger Cyrus (*Economicus* 4.20–24) or the beautiful ensemble a squadron of horsemen puts on show (*On Horsemanship* 11.7–12); an aesthetic of finesse and gracefulness, *leptotēs* and *charis*, among the Alexandrians, and so on.

Beyond taste's fleeting fluctuations, this search for wonder's essential effect seems to have dictated artists' technical innovations. That is how, for example, Neer interprets the evolution of Greek statuary from the Archaic to the Classical period, as a quest and a conscious effort by artists to intensify this effect: "The stylistic innovations become comprehensible when understood as a means to a historically specific end: the inducement of wonder" (Neer 2010, 85). What are traditionally reckoned as the four principal innovations of the period – the introduction of movement in subjects' poses, close anatomical representation, the depiction of subjects' inner state, three-dimensional representation of space – can be interpreted, in his opinion, not so much as an advance toward naturalism as an attempt by the artist to produce a *thauma idesthai*, that sensational impact on the work's observer, which techniques, equally sensational, convey notably at the clear cost of distortions thrust on the human body and its proportions. Thus, animated with eye-catching movement, subjects seem to cast projectiles at the spectator or to hurl their very selves at him (the Tyrannicides group, the god of the Artemision, Myron's *Discus Thrower*). Statues' sizes can become colossal, and choice of physical medium evolves into a preference for brilliant materials, gold and marble (Stewart 1990 I, 36). Statues similarly offer to the gaze, through the play of drapery, motion, or anatomy, a paradoxical shifting between the surface of the veil or skin, and the manifestation of a presence beneath this surface: that is how Neer interprets the fine drapery of the Ludovisi throne, the nude males seen in "the Motya-charioteer" or the bronzes of Riace. As for inner state, statues present to the gaze the same paradoxical coexistence of contraries: on one hand, the fixity of a representation, on the other, the temporal unfolding of a narrative, which reveals this state with a story that gives it meaning and direction. The effect on the spectator always proceeds here from the perception of *thauma*'s constitutive paradox.

Between Acceptance and Suspicion: Two Conceptions of Aesthetic *Thauma*

Born of an "in-betweeness," of the encounter between a perceived object and the awareness perceiving it as a marvel, wonder arises simultaneously from sensory perception, intellectual judgment, and emotion. Questioning the suitability of this emotion constantly recurs in the ancient texts, which distinguish a legitimate, intelligent wonder from credulous and deceptive amazement, where emotion deprives an individual of his resources. Reflection on aesthetic *thauma* tends, in a comparable way, to produce a similar separation between two ways of reception.

Once more, Archaic period descriptions can be considered paradigms that set up lasting modalities for understanding aesthetic *thauma*. These *ekphraseis* construct models of aesthetic reception that highlight two different ways for admiring the object: a Homeric mode that favors the trustworthy invitation *to accept the illusion of seeing*, and a Hesiodic mode that tends to *make the illusion seen* – to expose the working of a lure.

This orientation appears clearly in the techniques used to describe the object, as Becker (1995) analyzes them. It is possible to chart the description of an art object according to five modes of attention: first, focalization on the world the object depicts, or, second, direction of attention to the *medium* (the object's material component). Description can also be trained on the creative process: action and deeds of the creator; or on the creator himself, and especially the purpose behind the work's fabrication. Finally, description can focalize on the art object's reception by an observer: mention of the spectator's *thauma*.

These five "modes of attention" paid to the object imply two contrasting orientations as as regards the status of the artistic representation. The listener to a poem, through focalization on the world being depicted on the object, is invited to enter a second fiction inside the first, while, in an inverse movement, mentions of the material substrate, of the act of creation, of the creator and spectator, act as so many breaks in the illusion and provoke awareness of the object's artificiality.

The distribution of these "modes of attention" in Homeric and Hesiodic descriptions of objects reveals two orientations given to aesthetic *thauma*. Between welcoming the fiction and returning upon reflection to the object's artificial condition, the description of the shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18 shows a clear weighting toward the former.[5] The procedures that draw the listener's attention to the work's material aspect are discrete, the breaks in illusion sporadic. Description of scenes directly draws the listener into the world depicted, a universe constructed with utterly lifelike characteristics. In a way theoretically at odds with their metallic nature, the scenes are not described as fixed images, but as a narrative that unfolds in time to represent an action at length, that reveals the characters' intentions and inner state, their movements, the sounds they make; like the golden robots serving Hephaestus (419–420), the scenes possess intelligence (*noos*), voice (*audē*), and strength (*sthenos*)

and are animated with a life of their own. The events of this second universe thus acquire the same level of existence as those in the first narrative of the surrounding epic. This representation's essential status as "second" is not exposed. On the contrary, the reception fostered by the poem insists on the *thauma* of the observer: *thauma* of *all* humans, as Hephaestus foretold in 18.466–467, trusting amazement before the capacity of art to create a living universe.

Completely different is the reaction expected of the listener in the narrative describing the creation of the first woman in the *Theogony*, 570–589. There, the narrative characters' acceptance of the made-up illusion is exposed as blindness to the real nature of an object whose function is to deceive. Amazed regard is blind regard, caught up in the illusion created by figurative representation.

This narrative likens Pandora to a made-up and representational object in two ways: by her status as a figure modeled in clay and by the clothing she wears. The latter includes a veil embroidered by Athena, described as a "wonder to see" (574–575), and a diadem forged by Hephaestus, also described as a "wonder," decorated with a thousand "wonderful" motifs (578–584). Its description suddenly and meaningfully substitutes for that of the creature herself, as a commentary on Pandora's nature, pure, captivating externality yet as menacing as her diadem's savage beasts. The figure offers to the sight only this cascade of wondrous ornaments, a sparkling surface that arrests the gaze. In fact, assimilation to a figurative object confers on this being the duality that in the Hesiodic corpus is woman's essential character, described as *kalon kakon* ("beautiful evil") at *Theogony* 585, and in the *Works and Days* as a clear dichotomy, seductive exterior and bitch's heart. Diadem and creature molded of earth both appear as double objects, in which the spectator perceives something other than their pure materiality: the figurative representation becomes a snare.

It is this ability to work illusions on the sight of others that makes the object described as *thauma* the privileged instrument of deceit. A crafty creature uses this *trompe l'oeil* effect to exercise its power over the spectator. Indeed, the wonder felt by Pandora's first beholders confirms the snare's efficacy (588–589, tr. Loeb): "Wonder took hold of the deathless gods and mortal men when they saw that which was sheer guile [*dolon*], not to be withstood by men." Rife with meaning, the expression attributes to the verb "to see" a complement that designates precisely what men *do not see* in Pandora: *dolon aipun*, sheer, indomitable guile. In the grip of *thauma*, sight becomes blinded. Confronting Pandora, amazed contemplation fastens on her veil's beauty. And amazement casts a veil over the intellect.

Here the wonder's beauty is a snare: sign of defeat, mark of ignorance and of a lack of mental acuity, amazed contemplation is presented as a state that dispossesses the individual of his resources and reduces the human to his

fragile condition as dupe.

Confronting the figurative object's deceitful duplicity, the poet responds with a demand for truth, and he invites his listeners to train upon the *thauma* a gaze aware of the object's complexity. In the narrative scheme, the vocabulary of likeness immediately exposes the object's dual aspect, which the spectators within the narrative do not perceive. The use of words meaning "similar to" suggests alert discernment for anyone who views the object that is offered juxtaposed with what it is thought to resemble. Here the schemes of the proem of the *Theogony* are recognizable, as set forth in the Muses' famous declaration in verses 27–28. The song of the goddesses is presented in a double aspect, dependent upon their goodwill: they know how "to speak many deceptive things similar to actual things" and "to utter true things." These lines reveal a dichotomy between one mode of existence, in language, of "deceptive" realities imposing themselves with the same look as real things, and the mode of truly stated things. These "deceptions" or "falsehoods" thus define poetic representation's particular mode of being, which has recourse to fictional narrative to bring to light true meanings. By opposing two poetic modes, Hesiod claims for his poem an authoritativeness that consists in identifying some truths that are not assimilable to fiction but that emerge from it in a sort of commentary. The truth is therefore not an immediate given and, moreover, by Hesiod's insistence on the goodwill of the Muses, poetic speech is thought of not as a direct means of access to a reality, but as the property of powers beyond what is human. Within this context of claimed powers, the possibility of speech's manipulative use thus arises. Who knows when the Muses want to deceive and when they want to proclaim truths? Access to the truth requires an ability to evaluate, a critical competence, a power that the poet definitively arrogates to himself by depicting his privileged interview with the Muses. Similarly, in the tale of Pandora's creation, the shape is cast as a likeness, with the potential to deceive (Walsh 1984, 34). Apprehending the truth involves a reflective turn inward, far from the immediate acceptance of outward appearances.

The description of the shield of Heracles, included in the Hesiodic corpus, shows an identical tendency to lift the veil on the tricks of figurative illusion. This text transmits the requirement of truth by insisting on the object's artificial character. If the description borrows from procedures comparable to those seen in the shield of Achilles, to open on the illusion of a living universe (narrative setting of the image, mention of movements and sounds), the universe depicted does not possess, as it does in the shield of Achilles, the full freedom of real action: it is marked by a more accentuated fixity, which emphasizes the limitations of art's figurative powers. Movements are generally described by verbs in the imperfect or pluperfect tenses, immobilizing the characters in the process of their actions. Occasionally, a future participle expresses the action of a character caught in a striving toward

a future that will never be, like the fisherman freeze-framed on the point of casting his net (215). Figures are locked into the eternal repetition of the same action, and verbs expressing circularity expose the limits of the characters' field of endeavor as they repeatedly retrace their steps: this imprisonment within an eternal circle betrays awareness of the limits of plastic representation. The depicted world is fixed in metal, destined to repeat the same position forever, like those charioteers who strain for victory (310–311, tr. Loeb): "So they were engaged in an unending toil, and the end with victory never came to them, and the contest was ever unwon."

Lack of direct entry into the universe depicted is also marked. The way these metallic representations appear to the gaze consists only in "looking like," in being presented for viewing in awareness of a similarity that is inseparable from a concurrent awareness of difference. Omnipresent, the vocabulary of "as if" reveals this irreducible gap between art and reality. Details concerning the work's manufacture abound, as so many reminders of the object's artificial nature, inviting consideration of the phenomenon of depiction as the result of skill. The work's reception, the *thauma* written in the poem (140, 165, 218, 224, 318), thus depends essentially on technical prowess, and the listener's attention focuses on the artist's skilled activity in pulling off this illusion before the spectators' eyes. The poet of the *Shield of Heracles* therefore insists on figurative methods in order to reveal the tricks of a work that is clearly affirmed as essentially a representation: like the Muses at the beginning of the *Theogony* describing the special essence of poetic fiction, he means to circumscribe and unmask the phenomenon of depiction.

So the Hesiodic corpus develops a tendency to warn against a *thauma* clearly disclosed as deceitfulness, *apatē* or *dolos*, whereas Homeric descriptions prefer wondering welcome of the life represented on the object, *thauma* unburdened by suspicion. As Pinotti (1989, 31) has shown, this negative or positive value of *thauma* is closely linked to the status of sight, on one hand conceived of as a vehicle of illusion, on the other as a faculty of intelligent observation. When artifice begets amazement, the startled regard fastens on the surface of things, wonder (*thauma*) turns into "pain" (*pēma*). When intelligent activity accompanies it, *thauma* becomes a "sign" (*sēma*), inviting interpretation.[6]

These two irreconcilable tendencies endure throughout ancient literature (Halliwell 2002, 124, on Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.10.1–8), where texts oscillate around this dichotomy between unconditional acceptance of aesthetic wonder and caution against deceptive amazement. In an object described as *thauma*, its meaning as trap and snare, *apatē* and *dolos*, is often emphasized, like the various inventions of the god in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, which enable him to fool his brother, Apollo, especially the making of the lyre, whose dulcet tones subdue the latter's recalcitrance (424ff.). Reflection on *apatē*, deceitful illusion of which wonder is the vehicle, winds up, in the realm

of poetry, with disparagement of the wonderful's false seductions: Pindar, in the passage from the first *Olympian Ode* already cited (1.28ff.), relegates wonders to the insubstantial field of mortals' fickle rumor, as tales detached from the truth, bedecked with seductive and false variety. In contrast, the sophist Gorgias (fifth century BC) plays on the expected connection between *thauma* and *apatē* – as expressed, for example, in the Hippocratic formula, sarcastic to quack doctors (*Regimen* 24): "He who deceives [*exapatēsas*] the most is the most admired [*thaumazetai*]" – to reverse the terms: it is a legitimate deception, that induced by art. The tragedy called, in the context of a fragment of the same sophist, cited by Plutarch, a "spectacle marvelous to hear and see" (*thaumaston akroama kai theama*), is described as "effecting a deception" (*apatē*), by means of tales and sufferings (fr. 23 DK = Plutarch, *On the Fame of the Athenians* 348c). But in this deception, "he who deceives is more just than he who does not, and he who is deceived is wiser than he who is not" (tr. Loeb, modified): the one, more just, because he produces what he promised to do; the other, more wise, because the fact of not being insensible (*to mē anaisthēton*) makes him more inclined to give himself over to the pleasure of the dramatic speeches (cf. also the *Dissoi Logoi* 3.10: "When creating a tragedy or a painting, he who deceives [*exapatē*] the most, making things look real, is best"; Simonides, testimonium 14 Campbell, on Thessalians too gross to be "deceived" by the poet). Indeed, this total acceptance of aesthetic illusion, in Gorgias's thought, is an offshoot of the postulate that language does not allow access to reality, which is essentially inaccessible. Playing the game of *apatē* is playing the only game possible when it comes to the truth that eludes mankind. Appreciation of a work of art or literature is thus separated from the question of connection to a truth that it would be unable to depict, like those seductive but lying fables in the Pindaric point of view that presents itself as holder of myth's true version. One may note that a nice formulation, in an epigram of Posidippus of Pella (13.2), harks back in abbreviated form to this connection between *thauma* and *apatē* in the development of Gorgianic thought: a gem is praised as *thaum'apatēs* ("wondrous deception"). Wet, this extraordinary stone projects a light that runs all over its surface; dry, it reveals a Persian lion to the startled gaze.

The development of an entire field of negative connotations around *thaumata* further accentuates the separation between positive acceptance of aesthetic wonder and warning against the lures of depiction. *Thaumata* takes on specialized meanings, such as spectacles that play on the sensational, productions of marvelous tricks (*thaumatopoiein*): puppets, shadow plays, robots, carnival acts, trained lions and bears, sword swallowing, acrobatics,[7] all the spectacles that delight small children (Plato, *Laws* 658c) and excited audiences of gullible people (Isocrates, *Antidosis* 269). The word *thaumatopoios* defines a category of professional showmen: illusionists, magicians, jugglers, jesters, often with the pejorative nuance "charlatan."

Texts relating to wonder tend frequently to feature counter-movements, a tendency to substitute true marvels for false, truly astonishing subjects for imposters' empty illusions. Xenophon's *Symposium*, 7, provides a lovely example. As preparations are made for viewing a female acrobat's sensational feats on a spinning wheel, Socrates requests that she do something less dangerous. He then adds: "In fact, it isn't at all uncommon to find things to wonder at, if that's what one wants: there are puzzling things right before our eyes" (Tredennick/Penguin trans.). He points to a lamp and poses a paradox: why does one liquid, oil, augment the flame, while another, water, extinguishes it?

The work of Plato accommodates these two aspects of wonder, hermeneutic fecundity and stupid amazement. *Thaumazein* is pointed out as the origin of philosophic investigation, the true dizziness that throws Theaetetus into confusion and assures Socrates about his philosophic nature, serving as a criterion of recognition (*Theaetetus* 155c–e; *Philebus* 36e, for another example of philosophical *thaumazein* in the midst of a dialogue). Wonder also arises at the end of the philosophic quest, in the contemplation of the Ideas (*Symposium* 210e: aesthetic *thauma* confronting beauty-in-itself; Nightingale 2004, 258). But *thauma* in Plato can also be relegated to the sphere of the literally inessential, that which lacks true "being" and offers to the gaze only unsteady and deceitful appearance: a *thauma* infected with a sort of essential ontological defect – a mere marionette activated by the gods, like a human being (*Laws* 644d, 804b), a shadow in a cave (*Republic* 514b), a dream for wakened eyes (*Sophist* 266c). Yet this ontological lack is inversely proportional to the impact that *thauma* has on certain humans captivated by the illusions and mirages that flit before their gaze. Sensory weaknesses increase this ontological deficit; they deform reality and become the artist's playground: "And so scenery painting in its exploitation of this weakness of our nature falls nothing short of witchcraft, as do wonderworking [*thaumatopoiia*] and many other such contrivances" (*Republic* 602d, tr. Shorey, modified). Plato then opposes to these mirages the sure values of measure, calculation, and weight to correct this sensory distortion. Thus, from the perspective of ontological classification, in relation to an absolute Reality incarnated by the Ideas, the work of art finds itself demoted to the rank of imitation in the second degree. The famous analysis of Book 10 of the *Republic* (595a–602b) comes to the conclusion that mimetic art is twice removed from the truth (as imitation of an imitation) and that the painter, if he is good in his art, "only impresses children and fools" (598c). Consequently, the *thauma* experienced before the work of art undergoes the same degradation as its object, compared to the philosophical wonder experienced through contemplation of the Ideas: it is a "form of play, not to be taken seriously" (602b).

The *Sophist* depreciates even more the *thaumazein* confronting artistic

production, in that here the mimetic art is itself divided into two classes and the painter's art belongs to a category that distances it further from the truth. In this dialogue, a digression that looks at mimetic art concludes with a definition of the sophist and his art, putting an end to the difficult hunt for this dodging and elusive prey. The art of imitating, considered as a whole in the *Republic*, is now broken into two categories, the art of copying while respecting proportions and colors (*eikastikē*), and the art of fashioning likenesses (*phantastikē*) – which is precisely what those painters or sculptors do who do not produce faithful copies. The painter's human art is "as it were a man-made dream for waking eyes" (266c, tr. Cornford). Here again is the idea that artists play on the weakness of the senses in their quest for aesthetic impact, and that they do not care about the truthfulness of their copy, or show respect for actual proportions. Instead, they essentially seek to produce an effect on the viewer (236a). Here again is *thauma*'s ability to entrap, which deprives the spectator of any critical distancing. Thus, at the end of the search for a definition of "sophist," Plato compares the painter's ability to produce illusory images of everything with the sophist's deceptive claim to universal competence and knowledge: the sophist is a trickster (*thaumatopoios*), a magician who produces phantasms as unstable as they are dazzling (235b, 268d).

Between Cognitive Power and Emotional Vertigo

This contrasts with Aristotle's almost unconditional way of assigning a cognitive value to *thaumazein*, and especially aesthetic wonder. He attributes two recurrent characteristics to this affect in his work: it is a mechanism for acquiring a certain knowledge, and it is a pleasure (*hēdu*, *Poetics* 1460a17; *Rhetoric* 1371b1 [tr. Loeb]: "Learning [*manthanein*] and admiring [*thaumazein*] are pleasant"). The *Metaphysics* restates the Platonic idea that wonder, *thaumazein*, is philosophy's point of departure, but with a remarkable twist vis-à-vis the *Theaetetus*: astonishment is not only esteemed as a *pathos* ("feeling") peculiar to the philosopher. This cognitive astonishment affects all humans: thus "he who loves myths [*philomuthos*]" also loves wisdom (*philosophos*). The same basic lack of distinction between the pleasure of learning for the philosopher and the non-philosopher, subsequently differentiated in degree, finds expression in *Poetics* 4 (1448b12ff., tr. Grube): "learning things is most enjoyable, not only for philosophers, but also for others equally." The pleasures of learning and wondering are grafted, so to say, on to one another in human nature: the desire for learning is rooted in *thaumazein*, and this desire for learning reflects man's natural state (*Rhetoric* 1371a31ff.). In such a general definition of *thaumazein*, the wonder experienced confronting a work of art encompasses the cognitive pleasure inherent in this affect. Wonder before a representation, if it is not simply reduced to its intellectual dimension (Destrée 2013), appears as a pleasure of

recognition, a pleasure based on a reasoning process that compares and relates the object represented with its original and that ends in knowledge (*Rhetoric* 1371b4ff., tr. Loeb, modified): "Even if the object of imitation is not pleasant, [what pleases in the imitation] is the inference [*sullogismos*]: 'That is a so-and-so', so that the result is that we learn something" (cf. also *Poetics* 4, 1448b16). Aristotle mentions secondly the pleasure to be derived from a work's materiality: the materials used, as well as the workmanship, in cases where recognition of the original is not operative (where one has not previously seen it – *Poetics* 4, 1448b17). Yet even contemplating representations of things that actually cause us negative emotions, pain, disgust, or fear, is pleasant by reason of the specificity of aesthetic *thauma*, which arises precisely out of the simultaneous perception of the original and the art object (*Poetics* 1448b9: we like to look at images of beings whose originals pain the sight – cf. also *Problems* 19.5, 19.40).[8] In a passage from the *Parts of Animals* (645a7ff., tr. Loeb) that is a protreptic to biological study, analogy with aesthetic wonder leads to connecting the study of living creatures, even those unpleasant to look at, with the pleasure of *thaumazein*, because "in all natural things there is something marvelous [*thaumaston*]" (645a16–17). Wonder is a device leading to the investigation of causes and to intellectual pleasure; but it is also something more, the admiration felt confronting nature's handiwork, its organization of life forms, that is analogous to the *thauma* experienced beholding artistic talent. This wonder involves here consideration of a creative design, in the conception of natural objects no less than in that of art objects: "If we study mere likenesses of these things and take pleasure in so doing, because then we are contemplating the painter's or the sculptor's art which fashioned them, and yet fail to delight much more in studying the works of nature themselves, though we have the ability to discern the actual causes – that would be oddly illogical indeed" (645a11–15, tr. Loeb, modified).

Finally, Aristotle reflects specifically on the *thaumaston* in literature, and more particularly in two poetic genres, tragedy and epic. The word refers to the effect of surprise bound up with *peripeteia* (*Rhetoric* 1, 1371b10ff.), an effect tragedy especially aims for (*Poetics* 24, 1460a11; 18, 1456a19–21). This element of surprise is not a mere accessory that would deliver the spectator from boredom; on the contrary, it is meant as the poetry's purpose (*telos*, 1460b24) and as one component of aesthetic pleasure (*hēdu*, 1460a17). This effect of surprise, associated with fear and pity, awakens the humane feeling in a person (*philanthrōpon* – *Poetics* 18, 1456a19–21 – Destrée forthcoming).Yet a sense of implicit causality ought to accompany it. Chapter 9 of the *Poetics*, in fact, focuses its attention on the connection between verisimilitude and wonder, which are not self-contradictory: the effect of surprise, likely to provoke fear and pity, is stronger when the event defies expectation without, however, breaking a causal chain. Thus, even chance misfortunes are more surprising if they seem part of a design: Aristotle uses

the example of a statue collapsing on the murderer of the man whom the statue depicts. Surprise, fear, and pity are more intense if acts fit into a logical succession, rather than if they arise haphazardly, the result of pure coincidence (1452a1–11). The connection between the irrational and the wondrous is also mentioned in chapter 24, in a comparison between epic and tragedy: the effect of surprise is easier to produce in epic, where the requirements of verisimilitude are less strict (1460a11–17) because the actions are not taking place right before the spectators' eyes, as they are on the tragic stage.

While the work of Aristotle deals equally with wonder's cognitive and emotional features, rhetors of the Roman period, in their treatises, primarily focus on the affective aspect of the *thaumaston* in literature. They stress an intense emotional shock provoked by two qualities, grandeur and loftiness. In the first century BC, Dionysius of Halicarnassus employs this standard to contrast the style of Lysias, which "does not startle and amaze" (*kataplektikē*, *thaumastē*), because grandeur and loftiness (*hupsēlē*, *megaloprepēs* – *On Lysias* 13.19) are not his strengths, with the style of Isocrates, who is like the visual artists Polyclitus and Phidias, insofar as they provoke the *thaumaston* bound up with the lofty and grand (*mega*, *hupsos* – *On Isocrates* 3.38). In the *Treatise on the Sublime* attributed to Longinus (see Porter in this volume), this conception is promoted to the heart of the emotion aroused by the sublime in literature: *thauma* is simultaneously the vehicle and the criterion for recognizing the sublime (7.4: a universally experienced wonder is revealed as one of the sublime's necessary qualities). Its "ingredients," defined by the author of the *Treatise* as the effect of a natural inclination (35.4), are grandeur, loftiness, and strangeness (35.4–5: *paradoxon*; 9.2–3): "We are by nature led to marvel, not, indeed, at little streams but … at the Ocean …, nor do we consider our little fire more worthy of admiration than the craters of Etna …" (35.4, tr. Grube). Starting with the treatise's introduction (1.4), *thauma*, associated with *ekplēxis* (defined since Aristotle as *thauma* pushed to the nth degree, cf. *Topics* 126b15ff.), is the mark par excellence of the effectiveness of the sublime, which proceeds by a sort of rapture (*ekstasin*), expressed by the metaphor of lightning. Thus, *thauma* is seen as a vital emotional force, which escapes the individual's control and enslaves him; it is here differentiated from two other effects, persuasion and pleasure. Persuasion is thought of as an effect over which the listener retains full control, doubtless because persuasion involves an engagement of the intellect, a critical evaluation. The *thaumaston*, in the *Treatise on the Sublime*, is thus transferred to the realm of pure emotion. It loses its cognitive aspect; but it does not suffer the devaluation that usually occurs in Greek literature when this hermeneutic value disappears, as long as it continues endlessly in that initial moment of suspended interpretation, in shocked confrontation with the object.

Literary texts discussing aesthetic wonder from the High Roman Empire focus

on one particular dimension, which advances the question of *thauma*'s emotional impact: the connection between felt emotion and the power of speech to describe this effect. The contrasting play between these two sides of wonder leads to the emergence of a new character, the enlightened and learned aesthete who knows how to admire and how to describe the art work, unlike the gross and tasteless barbarian who admires dumbly and is content to raise his hand to show approval (Lucian, *The Hall* 3). Dialogues like the *Heracles* of Lucian or the collections of descriptions by Philostratus, the Elder and the Younger, devise conversational situations suitable for the didactic treatment of wonder by an educated man, *pepaideumenos anēr*. The neophyte's startled gaze is thus properly routed, placed under control. It suffices just to cite the very beginning of the description of a painting drawn from the *Iliad* of the Scamander River: "… my boy …, [are you] lost in wonder as to how fire could live in the midst of water? Well, then, let us try to get at the meaning of it. Turn your eyes away from the painting itself …" (Philostratus the Elder, *Images* 1.1, tr. Loeb).

The distinction between two modes of admiring finally takes the form of an opposition between the expert's eye and the layman's blank stare. Anecdotes throughout antiquity about famous artists highlight the skilled craftsman's connoisseurship compared to the non-specialist's (*idiotēs*) reaction. Aelian, *Miscellany* 14.47 (cf. Plutarch, cited by Stobaeus 4.20a, 34), reports the quip of the painter Nicostratus, who stood in amazement before the portrait of Helen by Zeuxis. A bystander asked him the reason for his fascination: "You wouldn't have asked me, if you had my eyes" (tr. Loeb) or, in Plutarch's version, "Take my eyes, and Helen will seem divine to you." And so this essential duality in the idea of wonder endures, handed down from age to age.

Translated from the original French by W.E. Higgins and N. Briggs, ENS Lyon.

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FURTHER READING

Prier (1989) is a book devoted to the phenomenology of *thauma* in Greece of the Archaic period and more generally to seeing: in carrying on the analyses of Bruno Snell, Prier invites a reconsideration of the phenomenology of Archaic perception while eschewing the Cartesian distinction between subject and object. The article of Mette (1961) offers a linguistic approach. The volume edited by Lanza and Longo (1989) contains some cross-disciplinary studies on wonder, including Pinotti's, which relates wonder to visual categories. Jouanna (1992) shows the ambivalence of *thauma* in the Hippocratics. For descriptions of Archaic art objects, one may single out the valuable study of Becker (1995). Pollitt (1974) spends a few pages on the question of wonder in art appreciation. The books of Frontisi-Ducroux (1975) and Pugliara (2003) focus on the themes of animation of matter, the figure of Daedalus, and robots. Neer (2010) and the earlier Neer (2002) offer a novel interpretation of the evolution of Archaic and Classical period art in terms of

impact on the viewer and the quest for *thauma*. Llewelyn (1988) and Nightingale (2004) deal with *thaumazein* in Plato and Aristotle. On wonder in aesthetic judgment, one can consult the studies of Greenblatt (1991) and Walton (1993).

NOTES

1 Neer (2010, 57): "*Thauma* is, in fact, a basic and hugely neglected element of Greek thinking about depiction."

2 "On comprend mal l'usage que pourrait faire une langue d'une forme durative exprimant la vision en tant que 'perception.'"

3 Prier (1989) substitutes for this distinction between subject and object – the fruit, in his opinion, of a mistaken, anachronistic displacement for the Archaic Greek conception – the phenomenological experience of two poles, "the 'this' and the 'other/that.'"

4 Cf. Kahn (1978, 82–83). The mythic depictions of *thauma* stress both its hermeneutic fecundity, with the message of Iris (cf. Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d), and its power to disorient.

5 This *ekphrasis* has an immense bibliography, going back to Lessing. Genette (2004, 81) includes it in his analysis of metalepsis. Nabokov's novel *Laughter in the Dark* (1938) offers a superb illustration of this play on the animation of the image, when Albinus undertakes to transform a painting of the Dutch School into an animated cartoon (ch. 1).

6 This play on the Greek words *thauma, sēma, pēma* (wonder, sign, pain) is recurrent: Hesiod, *Theogony* 500 (a stone vomited by Cronus, wonder and sign for humans), 588 and 592 (Pandora, wonder and pain). Helen, *thauma* in the *Cyprian Songs* (fr. 9, ed. Bernabé), is a "pain," *pēma*, in *Iliad* 3.160. The brooch of Odysseus can just as well be interpreted as *sēma*, "sign."

7 Plato, *Republic* 514b5; *Laws* 645b1, 658c1–11, 804b3; Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals* 734b10, 741b9; *Mechanical Problems* 848a11; *Metaphysics* 983a13; Isocrates, *Antidosis* 213.2; Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 19.2; Xenophon, *Symposium* 2.1; 2.7.

8 Note the recurrence of this idea in Plutarch: *Table Talk* 5.1, 673C–74C; *On Studying Poetry* 18A.

CHAPTER 29
Tragic Emotions

Christof Rapp

Emotions in Ancient Aesthetics

"Sing, oh goddess, the anger of Achilles, son of Peleus …" With these words Homer opens his epic, the *Iliad*, thus indicating that the tragic entanglements that will unfold in the following more than 15,600 verses originate from a particular emotion, namely *mēnis* – anger, wrath, rage, or the like. In the Greek text, *mēnis* (strictly speaking the accusative *mēnin*) is in fact the first word of the entire epos. Achilles' anger gives rise to a sequence of reactions that leads not only to the death of many of his fellow Greek heroes and his intimate friend Patroclus, but also, and ultimately, to his own untimely death. Taking up the legacy of early epic, the great Greek tragedies of the fifth century BC represented various types of emotions as motives for the conduct of their tragic characters. However, the heroes of epos and tragedy are not the only ones stirred by emotions: the audience, too, when listening to a rhapsodic performance of an epos or to actors and a chorus in the theater, is co-affected by the passions of the protagonists, by their misfortunes and their fates. While the spectators of tragedy experience painful feelings like pity and fear, the spectators of comedy are prone to laughter and amusement. Quite early, writers started to reflect on the emotive effect of stage play and musical performances. They also discovered that although the spectator of a tragedy is seized by painful emotions, he takes pleasure in exposing himself to the theatrical embodiment of painful misfortunes that he would never wish to experience in real life. Although melodic modes and rhythms have the power to excite our minds, they can also provide a pleasant feeling of relief. Accounting for the various emotional effects of music and theater was therefore seen as a theoretical challenge, one that encouraged philosophers to think more about the nature and power of emotions.

The following survey will give a brief indication of how tragedies are meant to arouse the emotions of an audience and of the types of emotions that tragic heroes experience. Early philosophical reflection on aesthetic emotions occurs in a milieu that is in general interested in the nature of emotions and in the role that emotions play in our ethical life. It is Plato and Aristotle who contribute immensely to philosophical accounts not only of the tragic emotions but of all kind of emotions and mental states involving both pleasure and pain. Plato, however, is highly critical of the emotional impact of poetry, and in his *Republic* he even suggests banning poetry from the ideal city-state because of its tendency to distort the natural order of our souls. For Aristotle,

it is an essential feature of tragedy that it arouses the emotions of pity and fear in the audience; he does not think that emotions as such are something bad or distorting. Aristotle famously summarizes the effect of tragedy by saying that it brings about a *katharsis* – purgation, purification, cleansing, relief, and so forth. This cryptic remark has been the subject of longstanding debates: Is it the spectator that is cleansed of or released from his tragic emotions? Or is it the tragic emotions themselves that are in a way, cleansed, purified, enhanced? The survey will conclude by briefly looking at an example of how these debates that originate in Greek philosophical aesthetics are taken up in the Roman imperial period, when the Stoa became the prevalent philosophical school and the Stoic ideal of *apatheia* – the absence of emotional upheaval – started to influence the discussion of aesthetic passions.

Emotions in Greek tragedy

The place where the aesthetic use of emotions culminates is clearly the theater. In particular, the Classical format of Greek tragedy, as shaped by the great tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, was famous for its overwhelming emotional effect on the audience. Ancient sources quite frequently refer to the emotional reaction of different audiences, to particular actors' capacities to make the spectators cry or to the emotional effect of dramas. For example, it is reported by Herodotus (6, 21) that one particular play, Phrynichus' *The Fall of Miletus*, provoked such excessive lamentation in the audience that the magistrate felt obliged to intervene and ban the play from the stage forever.

In tragedy there are, to begin with,[1] a number of aural elements that elicit emotive effects. Greek tragedy included parts that were spoken by the principal actors and parts that were sung by the actors or the chorus; both parts were metrically structured in different poetic meters, and the choral recitations were set to a melody. The aspect of melody is, according to Aristotle (*Poetics* 6, 1450b15–16), the most pleasurable accessory of tragedy. The ability of melodies or songs to excite emotion was almost proverbial: the mythological sirens, for example, were capable of seducing hardened and widely traveled heroes just by their tunes. We know from Plato and Aristotle that the emotive power of music was classified in accordance with the musical key, the rhythm, and the accompanying instruments; of all the musical instruments that were in use at this time the *aulos*, an oboe-like instrument, was often held to be the most exciting and exhilarating instrument (Aristotle, *Politics* VII.7, 1342b3) and hence was banned from Plato's ideal city (*Republic* III, 399d3–6). Furthermore, tragedians came to see that the manner of recitation and delivery strongly influenced how the drama affected the audience. Whereas in the early days the tragedians would act themselves in their plays, trained elocutionists and actors proved able to impress the audience by the modulation of their voices:

> Delivery [*hupokrisis*] is a matter of how the voice should be used in expressing each emotion, sometimes loud and sometimes soft and [sometimes] intermediate, and how the pitch accents should be intoned, whether as acute, grave, or circumflex, and what rhythms should be expressed in each case.
>
> (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* III.1, 1403b26–30; translation based on G. Kennedy)

Aristotle reports that actors who were able to use their voice in the way described were the ones who usually won the poetic contests – apparently due to the emotional impact of this aural device. He also mentions an actor by the name of Theodorus who was able to disguise his voice so effectively that the audience believed it was hearing the voice of the actual character (*Rhet.* III.2, 1404b21–4); he also attests that the voice and, in general, all aspects of delivery make a major difference in how effective one is at arousing pity in the audience (*Rhet.* II.8, 1386a33).

Another way of modulating the audience's emotion that could also, for lack of a better word, be termed "aural" relies on the diction, the selection of words (*lexis*) in accordance with their rhythm, timbre, and onomatopoetic potential on the one hand and their meaning, imagery, or metaphorical impact on the other. Provided that the audience is always in a similar emotional state to that of the orator or character (Aristotle, *Rhet.* III.7, 1408a23–4), the latter can use the wording of someone who is actually outraged or indignant in order to provoke the same sort of emotions in the former (ibid. 1408a16–9). Sometimes, it is the mere tone of a phonetic sequence that adds emotive value to the spoken word. The ancient Greek language is particularly creative and flexible when it comes to expressive or plaintive noises and screams. Aeschylus, for example, repeatedly has his characters and chorus scream, "*Ototototoi*" (*Agamemnon* v. 1072–3) or even "*Ototototoi*" (*Persians* v. 1043). The finale of the latter play actually culminates in a sequence of screams like "*oioi, oioi*," "*io io,*" *iē iē*." In a memorable scene from Sophocles' *Philoctetes* the principal character shouts out "*papai, apappapai, papappapappapappapai*" (v. 745–6).

There are also visual effects that contribute to the emotional effect of tragedy. In his *Poetics* Aristotle claims that *opsis* – the visual aspect that is visible to the audience, namely the stage setting, enactment, or spectacle – is the most persuasive, most agitating aspect of tragedy, though it is the one least based on art (*Poetics* 6, 1450b16–8). Hence, the visual aspect of staging can, in principal, evoke the tragic emotions of pity and fear, along with other emotions that are, according to Aristotle, not really essential to the proper effect of tragedy (*Poet.* 14, 1453b1–11). The scenery, costumes, and theatrical masks may contribute the visual dimension of tragedy's effect on the audience. In general, showing a victim's clothes or other belongings might be enough to arouse the audience's pity (Aristotle, *Rhet.* II.8, 1386b1–4). Certain gestures were seen as expressing the characters' state of mind – and the

repertoire of emotional and emotive gestures exhibited by Greek epic and tragedy is most impressive. In the *Iliad*, for example, Priam and Hecuba beg their son Hector not to counter Achilles' fatal attack in front of the city walls: Hector refuses to avoid the enemy, and his father starts to pluck and tear the hairs from his head, while his mother bares her breast (*Iliad* XII, 77–80) in order to arouse her son's pity. Similar dramatic gestures are common to many tragedies of the Classical period: women exposing their breasts, other characters tearing or cutting their hair, beating their heads, slashing their faces, ripping their clothes, and so forth.[2]

Another important visual aspect of tragedy is dancing. The chorus of a tragedy would dance, and this dance could express various emotions at the same time – those of the protagonists or those of a witness – and arouse similar emotions and a similar level of excitement in the audience. Aristotle actually says that dance in the theater is a means of imitating types of characters, emotions, and actions (*Poet.* 1, 1447a27–8). In certain contexts, dance can also express orgiastic frenzy, as it was most probably meant to do in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where the god Dionysus exploits the ecstatic state of the women of Thebes to take revenge on King Pentheus. Indeed, the general setting of the *Bacchae* and the ecstatic dancing of the women of Thebes in this remarkable drama should remind us of the context in which Greek tragedy was originally performed, namely the Dionysian cult and the annual Dionysian festival. Festival-goers were acquainted with the orgiastic nature of the Dionysian cult and they came to the theater not with the detached attitude of the average modern theater-goer, but in anticipation of an exciting spectacle that was likely to get its audience emotionally involved.

Last but not least, the subject matter and the plot of a tragedy can also provoke certain passions in the audience. If, for example, the subject matter was taken from historical events in which some of the ancestors of a public audience were involved, the mere mention of such events would clearly provoke a certain emotional effect. In Aristotle's attempt to give a general account of tragedy, the plot is said to be central to the arousal of the tragic emotions (see below). What he is thinking of, however, is not just the selection of a theme or plot, but rather the artful organization of material by the tragedian in such a way that the protagonist, without having done any condemnable harm or crime, is completely ruined at a tragic turn in his life. If such a plot is properly organized it will, as a rule, bring about the tragic emotions of pity and fear even in someone who only reads the play.

Apart from the emotions such as pity, fear and the like, by which the emotional impact of tragedy was usually characterized, several other types of emotions play an important role in tragedy, not because they are meant to characterize the audience's reaction to the tragic happenings, but because they are among the principal motives of the tragic agents.[3] For example, the heroes of tragedy and epic often act out of motives like anger, rage, fury, indignation,

emulation, love, hate, longing, shame, and so on.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Achilles' rage (*mēnis*) was taken by Homer to be the origin of the chain of events that ultimately led to many tragic ends, including Achilles' own death. Anger or rage (other Greek words for this emotion are *orgē* and *cholos*) thus acquired a reputation for being an exceptionally dangerous and pernicious emotion, because it pushes people to perform actions that they are bound to regret. Anger arises whenever we think we have been insulted, slighted, despised, offended, and "disrespected." It is a painful experience, as it is meant to violate our feeling that we deserve to be treated more respectfully. It goes against our wish to be seen and to see ourselves as respectable, valuable people. The violation of this wish is painful, and the resulting pain awakens the desire for revenge, because revenge can cause a certain amount of pain in the insulter, thus compensating us for what we have suffered. Anticipating the act and the effect of revenge is pleasant, which prompts Aristotle to characterize anger as the longing for revenge caused by an insult, a longing that is partly painful and partly enjoyable (*Rhet.* II.2, 1378a30–b4). Achilles, to refer again to the example of the *Iliad*, was hurt by the insulting behavior of Agamemnon, the Great King of the Greeks (who, in order to demonstrate his omnipotence, took away the maid that Achilles had received as prize), and took revenge, by refusing to support the Greeks in battle anymore. Euripides' Medea is at first led by a feeling of uncompromising love for Jason that later turns to implacable rage after Jason betrays her. He has her say, "I know that what I am going to do is bad, but anger overpowers my plans – anger which is cause of greatest troubles for mortals" (*Medea* 1078–1080). In a similar way, other tragic heroes are driven by other kinds of passions: Sophocles' Ajax is even driven to suicide by his feeling of shame. Seneca's Oedipus is moved by fear and his Phaedra by love, and so forth.

Early Reflections on the Nature of Emotions

Early reflections on the aesthetic role of emotions went hand in hand with the beginning of philosophical theorizing about the nature of emotions. For philosophers of the late fifth and the early fourth century BC, the phenomenon of emotion became an increasing challenge in several respects and contexts. One such context was the ongoing dispute with the so-called sophists, who propagated a rhetoric that was crucially based on the excitement of emotions in the audience. For philosophers like Plato and the early Aristotle this was a problem, because they wanted a certain degree of rationality to prevail in public and judicial debates, and the increasing prevalence of the kind of emotional rhetoric favored by the sophists rendered this difficult, if not impossible.

Among the first reflections that have come down to us on the power of tragedy

are those of the sophist Gorgias, for whom poetry is nothing but metrically structured speech, who praises in his *Encomium of Helen* the power of speech (*logos*) and describes the emotional impact of poetry thus: "There comes upon its hearers fearful shuddering [*phrikē*] and tearful pity [*eleos*] and grievous longing [*pothos*] and at the good fortunes and evil actions of others' affairs and bodies through the agency of words the soul experiences suffering of its own" (*Encomium of Helen* 9, tr. J. Dillon/T. Gergel). Gorgias mentions here one emotion involving fear and another entailing a sort of compassionate grief or pity. This pair of emotions was subsequently used to account for the emotional effect of tragedy in general; Aristotle famously includes the pair of pity and fear in his definition of tragedy (see below).

Another context that called for a more refined account of emotions was ethics and theory of action. If one assumes, as Plato and Aristotle did, that the good life and the right conduct is a matter of doing whatever we do for the sake of the good, then the non-rational impulses, including appetites and emotions, which are not by their nature directed toward the good, might be seen as distorting forces in our lives that prevent us from doing what we should do and really want to do. And once non-rational impulses are thought to have such a destructive potential, we must take an interest in learning how to either control or domesticate these non-rational desires; otherwise we would find ourselves being acted upon by these impulses rather than acting ourselves. For philosophers who analyze the question of the good life along such lines it is crucial to work out the intuition that we are driven by both rational and non-rational impulses. In Plato's philosophy the corresponding project leads to the famous model of a tripartite human soul (see below); in Aristotle's ethics we find the congenial idea that the human soul is partly rational and partly non-rational, and that the non-rational part of the soul is in its best condition (what Aristotle calls the *arēte*, i.e. virtue, of character) when it is in accordance with what the rational part of the soul prescribes. The philosophical subdiscipline that explores the soul's various parts or faculties, the discipline we have come to call "moral psychology," is also concerned with localizing and outlining the emotions along with other psychological entities such as opinions, desires, appetites, feelings of pleasure and pain, and so on. For reasons like these, the prevailing ancient schools of ethics were directly linked to moral-psychological questions, which, in turn, included as a necessary part the inquiry into the nature of emotions.

Before taking a closer look at these accounts of the nature and the psychological neighborhood of emotions, there is another context for the early philosophical exploration of emotions that deserves to be mentioned: The Greeks would often refer to the emotions as "*pathē of the soul*," that is, what the soul experiences or suffers. This was meant in contrast to what the body suffers, that is, sicknesses, injuries, aging, loss of hair, bodily pains and bodily pleasures, etc. However, this parlance of "passions or affections of the soul"

by no means excludes emotions from at the same time being alterations of the body. On the contrary, several philosophical schools even used emotions as paradigms for what the soul experiences together with the body. Aristotle, for example, argued that shame is an emotion rather than a disposition, because blushing is a clearly bodily symptom of shame (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* IV.9, 1128b13–5). Similarly, the Stoics and the Epicureans referred to the bodily symptoms of emotions – for example, that people alter their facial expression, that they turn red or pale respectively – as evidence that there must be an interaction between body and soul (and that, hence, the soul must be corporeal to facilitate this interaction).[4] For reasons like these, emotions also came to play a role in discussions about the relation of body and soul. In addition, the somatic-physiological side of emotions was recognized as an object of study for the field of medicine, and thus the bodily alterations connected with the several types of emotions were described in detail.

For those first attempting to localize the emotions among other psychological phenomena it seemed striking that emotions are typically connected with the feelings of pleasure and pain: some emotions are obviously painful, while others are pleasant. Whether and how pleasures are an ingredient of the good and happy life has been a philosophical controversy since the time of Socrates. In his later works Plato sought to respond to this controversy by differentiating various types of pleasure, since he became aware that not all types of pleasure derive from the satisfaction of bodily needs. As opposed to these bodily pleasures there are, as Plato recognized, certain pleasures that are not directly related to the presence of such a somatic need. In the *Philebus*, for example, he describes how certain pleasures can derive just from the expectation of a pleasant event:

> Socrates: But now accept also the anticipation by the soul itself of these two kinds of experiences (the experience of pleasure or pain, sc.); the hope before the actual pleasure will be pleasant and comforting, while the expectation of pain will be frightening and painful. – Protarchus: This turns out then to be a different kind of pleasure and pain, namely the expectation that the soul experiences by itself, without the body. Socrates: Your assumption is correct.
>
> (*Philebus* 32b–c; tr. D. Frede)

Pleasures deriving from mere expectation belong to the soul, not to the body. Corresponding to the pleasures mentioned above that come about through expectation, there are also pleasures that derive from mere memory (*Philebus* 33c; see also Aristotle, *Rhet.* I.11, 1370a27 *et seq.*). The acknowledgment of the existence of such psychological pleasures and pains was an important step toward developing an account of emotions. The logical next step was to distinguish types of psychological pleasure and pain on the basis of what we expect or remember. A simple version of this step can also be found in Plato:

> Athenian: In addition to these two (pleasure and pain, sc.), he has opinions [*doxai*] about the future, whose general name is 'expectations'. Specifically, the anticipation of pain is called 'fear', and the anticipation of the opposite is called 'confidence'.
>
> (*Laws* 644c–d; tr. T.J. Saunders)

In these lines we can find the idea of differentiating pleasant and painful psychological states on the basis of the prospective (or retrospective, as one may infer from *Philebus* 33c) opinions or views that bring about these feelings; it turns out that these different states correspond to different emotions like fear on the one hand, and confidence on the other. Plato himself was confident that emotions like "wrath, fear, longing, grief, love, jealousy, malice and other things like that" (*Philebus* 47e) can be explained as precisely these kinds of "pain within the soul itself" or as mixtures of psychological pleasure and pain.

Aristotle was not so explicit in arguing that emotions are themselves kinds or mixtures of pleasure and pain, but he insisted that emotions are at least firmly combined with feelings of pleasure and pain.[5] It seems clear from his definitions of particular types of emotions that he followed Plato in differentiating painful and pleasant states in terms of the expectations or opinions with which they are associated. For example, fear, shame, and indignation are all painful feelings, but while the first comes about through the expectation that a painful or destructive evil is likely to happen in the near future, the second is combined with the anticipation of the possible loss of honor and good reputation, and the third depends on the judgment that the fortune of another person is undeserved. In a similar manner, and equipped with the idea that different objects of our pleasant and painful attitudes individuate different emotions, Aristotle undertakes to define something like 15 different types of emotions in the second book of his *Rhetoric*.

In sum, Aristotle takes emotions to be intimately connected with states of pleasure and pain. They vary in accordance with our opinions or judgments and, correspondingly, with the objects at which they are directed. Thus, although emotions themselves do not belong to the rational part of the soul, they are nevertheless dependent on certain cognitive efforts, such as having beliefs and making judgments. Emotions are also connected with our desires, as we generally strive to avoid painful states and retain pleasant ones. Some emotions are essentially connected with a specific desire. Anger, for example, always involves a desire to take revenge. Our emotional dispositions are trained and habituated in the course of our education, but while we are praised or blamed for our emotional dispositions (*hexeis*), we are in general not praised or blamed for experiencing occurrences of emotions, but for experiencing them in a suitable or unsuitable way respectively. For Aristotle, having the virtues of character implies that one always has the right emotions when one should, toward whom one should, and so on. Having the right

desires and emotions is what Aristotle takes to be the good state of the non-rational part of the soul. Emotions are crucial, then, for defining virtue, which again is one of the key notions of Aristotle's ethics.

Plato on the Distorting Effects of Poetry and Music

One of the most amazing accounts of the emotional impact of the arts is to be found in Plato's *Republic*. He is impressed by tragedy's power to corrupt even decent people (Plato, *Republic* X, 605c–d). At least in the context of his *Republic*, he seems to regard these emotional effects as thoroughly unwelcome. The interlocutors of this dialogue undertake to sketch the essentials of a just city. They quickly come to agree that any city that is not content with the satisfaction of basic needs, but aspires to more sophisticated comforts, requires people who act as what they call "guardians" who are meant to function as an army against outer enemies and as police in inner affairs. Due to their double function the guardians should be fierce and harsh to enemies on the one side and gentle toward their own people and those they know on the other (*Republic* II 374e–376c). This ideal character profile of the guardians occasions a long excursion concerning the education of the future guardians: Education broadly conceived involves gymnastics for the body and instruction in the fine arts for the soul. Concerning the latter, the dialogue offers a detailed discussion of the pedagogical impact of poetry and music. Young people are not supposed to learn from poets that death is something to be feared or lamented, nor that gods commit disgraceful acts (for, if they hear and absorb false opinions from myths and tales, it will be hard to erase these opinions in the course of their adult lives: 378e). The negative impact on the souls of the young is said to be increased by imitation (*mimēsis*), that is, when actors speak as though they were someone else. The idea is that if someone keeps imitating certain character traits, those same traits will enter into one's own habits and nature (*Rep.* III 395d). Hence, young people should not be allowed to imitate people that are suffering misfortune and are possessed by sorrows and lamentations (395d–e) – as happens in the theater. The consequence the interlocutors of the *Republic* draw is an uncompromising one: If imitation of behavior of this sort is supposed to foster adults with a timid and cowardly character, it would be better for the city to erase all passages from Homer and the other poets that depict indecent behavior of gods and heroes.

The philosophical background of Plato's position is provided by his theory of the tripartite soul: Since it is possible for us to suffer and to desire opposed things at the same time, while one single subject cannot have two opposite inclinations in relation to the same thing at the same time, Plato argues (*Rep.* IV 436a–441c), our soul must be subdivided in accordance with different types of inclinations. First, it seems obvious that the rational part of our soul (*logistikon*), by which we deliberate and calculate, must be distinguished from

the appetitive part (*epithumētikon*) by which we long for bodily pleasures and for the satisfaction of our needs. The appetitive part, however, can be combated by another non-rational part of the soul, the spirited one (*thumoeidēs*): this happens, for example, if we get angry about appetites we happen to have. Equipped with this tripartite account of the soul together with the maxim that it is the rational part of the soul that should reign over the non-rational parts, Plato is in a position to explain what is wrong about poetic imitation in general. First of all, the work of imitation is always different from the original it imitates; it is not the thing itself, not the true thing, as it were, and, hence, it does not convey truth. Given that the rational part of the soul is always out for truth and the work of imitation has an inevitable distance to the real and true thing, imitation always consorts with a part of us that is far from reason (*Rep.* X 603a–b). It can be concluded, hence, that poetic imitation primarily addresses the non-rational, appetitive part of the soul that "leads us to dwell on our misfortunes and to lamentation, and that can never get enough of these things" (604d). Furthermore, the imitative poet arouses, nourishes, and strengthens the non-rational part of the soul and so tends to destroy the rational part of it. A hypertrophic non-rational part of the soul, again, interferes with what we would need most under difficult circumstances, that is, the properly functioning deliberation within the rational part of soul (604c).

In the same pedagogical context, Plato discusses the use of music, of musical modes, rhythms, and instruments. The right sort of rhythm and harmony, says Plato, permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else; it affects it most strongly and can – in the best case – bring about the well-orderedness of the soul (*Rep.* III 401d), namely the state in which the irrational impulses do not interfere with the rational command and the soul is, accordingly, said to be virtuous. This is the effect of suitable rhythms and modes, while unsuitable music can have contrary and, indeed, disastrous effects on the soul. For the education of the young guardians in the just city of the *Republic* there is, in particular, no use for modes of lamentation or soft and relaxed ones (as performed at drinking parties); these criteria exclude certain musical modes, while certain other modes turn out to be useful, namely the ones that either imitate the courageous warrior who is active in battles or imitate a person who acts in peaceful voluntary dealings in a moderate and self-controlled way (399b–c). By the same criteria all poly-harmonic and multi-stringed instruments are excluded and only the lyre and the cithara are left for use in an urban environment, while certain flutes are left for the shepherds in the country. In a similar vein, appropriate rhythms are selected in accordance with which rhythms correspond to someone who lives an ordered and courageous life and to the meter of his words.

Plato's views about the distorting effects of poetry and music have often been met with criticism; his idea to ban the poets from the just city has even been interpreted as a totalitarian trait in his thinking. However, it must be kept in

mind that all these regulations are part of a thought experiment that tries to correlate an ideally ordered city with an analogously ordered state of the individual soul. The order of the soul, in turn, implies that the non-rational part does not rebel against the rational one. This, again, leads to the consideration of factors that can distort the order of the soul. And within this very peculiar context, common cultural institutions of Plato's time, such as the performance of tragic poetry, come under scrutiny. That the resulting suggestion to censor and to ban major parts of Greek literature is not without irony sometimes shines through, for example when the interlocutors of the *Republic* "ask Homer and the other poets not to get angry" when they start to excise all the supposedly problematic passages from their poems (*Rep.* III 387a–b). Finally, all the provisions regarding poetry are made for a pedagogical purpose and with a view to emotionally immature recipients, while the more mature interlocutors themselves are happy to admit that the poems under scrutiny can be entertaining and pleasing.

Aristotle on the Arousal of Pity and Fear in Tragedy

The most influential treatment of the emotions in ancient aesthetics is that in Aristotle's definition of tragedy. As already outlined above, tragedies were generally famous for their potential to arouse the audience's emotions. Aristotle clarified this emotional effect and made it a part of the essential nature of tragedy. Far from criticizing it the way Plato did, Aristotle adds that the arousal of such emotions by a tragedy leads to a sort of purgation, purification, cleansing, or relief (*katharsis*). The key idea is expressed in the following very compressed formula: "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action which is serious and complete […] in the mode of dramatic enactment and not narrative, effecting [*perainousa*] through (the arousal of) pity [*eleos*] and fear [*phobos*] the *katharsis* of suchlike emotions" (*Poetics* 6, 1449b24–8).

All the other elements of this definition had been introduced in the preceding passages of the *Poetics*: that the tragedy is a sort of *mimēsis* (i.e. imitation or representation), that it imitates actions, that these actions have to be unified or complete in a certain way, that the tragic representation of this action takes place by enactment and not just by report or narration, etc. It is only the final formula about pity, fear, and *katharsis* that has not been prepared or explicated in the immediate context. The term *katharsis* (in this peculiar meaning) is not taken up again in the remainder of the text. The emotions of pity and fear, by contrast, are mentioned and commented on in different parts of later chapters; they play a particularly important role when Aristotle discusses the plot or the story of the tragedy, which, as he never tires of repeating (*Poet.* 11, 1452a38–b1; 13, 1452b33 *et al.*), must be lamentable and frightening in a quite precise way.

If we focus for a moment on the final formula that introduces the emotional effect of tragedy – the formula that tragic imitation "effect(s) [*perainousa*] through (the arousal of) pity [*eleos*] and fear [*phobos*] the *katharsis* of suchlike emotions" – it is striking, in the first place, that even this brief formula seems to introduce two logically distinct processes: the arousal of pity and fear, and the *katharsis* of suchlike emotions. Strictly speaking, the formula does not explicitly refer to the *arousal* of pity and fear – it only says that it effects *katharsis* from such emotions *through* pity and fear. However, in the rest of the *Poetics* we learn little or nothing about the purgative or relieving effect of tragedy, but quite a lot about how it arouses certain emotions in the first place. Also, the second process, the one of purifying or expurgating, presupposes that there are certain episodes of emotions; this is clear from the phrase "of suchlike emotions." Even if "suchlike" is broad enough to cover more emotions than those explicitly mentioned, it is inconceivable that the formula "of suchlike emotions" could be understood as not including the aforementioned emotions of pity and fear. And if the process of *katharsis* actually presupposes that the audience is currently moved by episodes of pity and fear, it is most likely that these are just the same episodes of pity and fear that were brought about by the tragic plot – otherwise it would be strange to assume that the spectators just happen to be in such an emotional state of mind.

We can conclude then that Aristotle's account of the emotional impact of tragedy comprises two parts or processes, the arousal of pity and fear, and the *katharsis* of "suchlike" emotions (though it is also common to refer to this whole account as the "cathartic effect of tragedy according to Aristotle"). The first part will be considered in the remainder of this section, the second part, which includes *katharsis* in its narrower sense, will be discussed below. As for the arousal of pity and fear, some remarks about the nature of these two emotions might be in order before the more technical question of how tragedy manages to steer these emotions in the audience is considered.

As already pointed out, it had been common since the time of the sophist Gorgias to characterize the emotional effect of tragedy by emotions that correspond to what we would approximately translate as pity and fear. Aristotle seems to have assumed that emotions can be individuated by the characteristic objects toward which they are directed and by the opinions or judgments that accompany the pleasant or painful feeling inherent in each episode of an emotion. The emotion, usually translated as "pity," "compassionate grief," and the like, namely *eleos*, was thought to be essentially connected with the undeserved misfortune of other people. Whenever one observes another's unmerited suffering, one comes to experience a certain share of this suffering. This latter phenomenon, that we ourselves feel bad about what other people undeservedly experience, might be due to an anticipation of harmful things that could happen to us. And this is

again why the Greek *eleos* is often said to be self-referential as opposed to its more altruistic Christian counterparts, such as *misericordia*. In Aristotle's definition of *eleos* this moment is captured by the claim that this emotion is aroused by evils "that one expects himself or one of the people close to him to suffer" (*Rhet.* II.8, 1385b14–5). And since a mechanism like this seems a likely candidate for building an emotional tie between the spectator and the tragic hero – the spectator's grief about the fate of the tragic character is inextricably connected with the vulnerability of his own existence – *eleos* or pity became the embodiment of what people feel when watching a tragedy.

Now, pity is only one partner in a pair of emotions that characterize the tragic experience, the other being *phobos* or fear. Fear, again, can be straightforwardly characterized by the objects at which this emotion is directed and by the thoughts we usually have about these objects. In general, fear is an unpleasant worry about imminent future harms or evils. In order to actually feel fear we must be of the opinion that we are likely to suffer these evils in the not too distant future. As part of the pair of tragic emotions, pity and fear, *phobos* is the state of being frightened or scared by what happens to people (here: the tragic characters) whom we take to be similar to us, while pity is the feeling directed at undeserved suffering (Aristotle, *Poet.* 12, 1453a4–5). And one of the reasons why we think of ourselves as similar to the tragic heroes is that we are similarly vulnerable to the sort of misfortune they suffer and that such misfortune would strike us quite as undeservedly as it strikes the tragic heroes.

How is it that tragedy manages to arouse these two emotions? As pointed out above, tragedy has various emotive means at its disposal: aural aspects, such as the voices of the actors, the chants sung by the chorus, visual aspects, and so on and so forth. For Aristotle, however, these are just accessories. He stresses again and again that the most important aspect of a tragedy is its plot (*Poet.* 6, 1450a15); the plot (*muthos*) is also said to be the principle (ibid. 1450a38) or the soul (ibid.) of each tragedy. In a good tragedy it is this plot alone that brings about the peculiar emotional impact of tragedies. This can be proved by the test that a good tragic plot will bring about the tragic emotions even without enactment or scenery, if one only reads it to oneself (*Poet.* 6, 1450b18–9; 14, 1453b1–6). How is such an effect possible?

The mechanisms underlying the tragic arousal of pity and fear are, according to Aristotle, similar to those at work in a public speech, when an artful orator manages to manipulate the audience's emotions. The orator who uses Aristotle's art of rhetoric is equipped with a preliminary definition of each and every type of emotion. From this definition he can infer which objects and opinions are connected with each type of emotion. Making an audience feel a particular emotion is, then, essentially a matter of making them believe that a certain object is given and of making them judge or think about this object in a certain way. In order to arouse, for example, anxiety in an audience, the

artful orator will make these people think that a harmful or destructive evil is about to happen in the not too distant future and that they have no means to avert this danger. Insofar as the rhetorical mediation of these emotions applies the audience's opinions, thoughts, or judgments and insofar as these can be regarded as belonging to our cognitive apparatus, one might say that this is a *cognitive* or *cognitively mediated* process (saying it is *cognitive*, however, does not imply that it is *rational*: for example, the judgment that some harmful evil is about to happen might be ill founded).

Now, this may hold of oratory, but oratory is quite different from tragedy. However, in this particular question – the question of how the tragic emotions come about – Aristotle explicitly says that to make the actions lamentable and frightening the tragedian has to use the same procedures or propositions (*ideai*)[6] familiar to us from the *Rhetoric* (*Poet.* 19, 1456b2–5). In fact he points out that regarding the arousal of emotions the only difference between oratory and tragedy is that the tragedian cannot use explicit statements or hints (*didaskalia*), unlike the rhetorician (who can argue that someone is, for example, deserving of pity), but has to incorporate these characteristics (that someone is lamentable or something is frightening) into the actions themselves (ibid. 1456b5–7). Again, how is this feasible? How can emotional characteristics be incorporated into the actions themselves? Indeed, Aristotle assumes that it is possible to construe the plot as a *mimēsis* of pitiable or lamentable and frightening actions (*Poet.* 9, 1452a1–3); and it is one of the core issues of his *Poetics* to lay bare the conditions under which a plot can have such an effect. As a minimal requirement the particular actions that make up a plot must be connected in a plausible, likely, or even necessary way (7,1452a12–3). Next, the plot will not be pitiable if it presents a wicked protagonist whose fate turns from prosperity to affliction or vice versa; nor is it pitiable if an entirely impeccable character passes from good fortune to bad. The pitiable sequence of action is rather one that shows a good person passing from good fortune to bad – not because of her wickedness, but because of an isolated mistake (13. 1452b33–1453a10). Aristotle distinguishes between simple and complex plots and points out why it is the latter one that is more apt to bring about pity and fear than the former; a plot can be made more complex and can have a greater emotional impact if it includes dramaturgical effects such as a sudden reversal or the protagonists' recognition of facts or persons that had been previously unknown (*Poet.* 11). In addition, the tragedian has to depict his protagonists as being of a certain character; their character becomes obvious from what they do or what they say (*Poetics* 15). Since the spectators will only feel pity for the protagonists if they regard them to be similar, it is important that they come across as having a good character and decent convictions. Bearing such instructions in mind, the tragedian will be able to compose a plot that is the *mimēsis* of lamentable and frightening human beings and actions and will in this way bring about the emotional effect that defines tragedy.

Aristotelian *Katharsis* of Emotions

When Aristotle introduces the notion of *katharsis* in his famous formula that through pity and fear tragedy effects the *katharsis* of such emotions, he seems to take for granted that his readers are familiar with this concept. Aristotle himself nowhere explains this term and the explanation that his *Politics* announces will be given in the *Poetics* (*Politics* VIII.7, 1341b38–40) has not come down to us. The problem is that the notion of *katharsis* is connected with quite heterogeneous associations. For example, it is used by medical writers to describe the impact of laxatives and emetics as well as various other kinds of excretion of bodily fluids. In a quite different context it is used for religious purgation rituals. One part of the notorious controversies about the meaning of *katharsis* in Aristotle's *Poetics* originates from the question whether one of these contexts – the medical or the ritual one – is relevant for the understanding of *katharsis* in the *Poetics* or whether it is rather Aristotle's ethics that provides the proper background for the interpretation of poetic *katharsis*. Another part of the scholarly disputes about the right interpretation of this notion derives from a linguistic ambiguity: when Aristotle says that through pity and fear tragedy brings about the *katharsis of suchlike emotions*, the genitive can either be meant as an objective genitive or as a genitive of separation. In the former case it means that the emotions are the object of an act of purifying, cleansing, or refining (the emotions will persist after the *katharsis* has taken place – though in a purified or somehow "enhanced" way), while in the latter case the genitive indicates that someone is cleansed or released *from* her emotions (the particular emotions someone is released from will not persist after the *katharsis*; it is the nature of *katharsis* to terminate a particular experience of emotions). The difference between these two readings is immense, but a simple and definitive decision between the two ways to construe the genitive seems to be difficult.

What the difference between the objective and the separative genitive amounts to can be fleshed out by the consideration of two competing and by now almost classic interpretations of the Aristotelian *katharsis.* The first of these interpretations assumes that the emotions of pity and fear must be the objects of the *katharsis* and that the enhancement that these emotions undergo is a moral one. This would associate the peculiar effect of the tragedy with ethics and moral psychology rather than with medicine or religious rituals. Such a view can be justified, for example, by the observation that Aristotle's *Poetics* establishes many links between tragedy and ethics: tragedy is said to be the *mimēsis* of human actions, and human action is the subject of ethical decisions. Similarly, the *Poetics* emphasizes the role of the character of its protagonists and the development of a good and virtuous character seems to be the ultimate end of Aristotle's ethics. Last but not least, the defining effect of tragedy is an emotional one, and in Aristotle's ethics it is a person's emotions that indicate whether she has a good and virtuous or a corrupt

character. Looking from such an ethical perspective, the question would be why and how a person would benefit from having her emotions cleansed or enhanced, since for Aristotle the having of emotions as such is not blameworthy. Since Aristotle's ethics is very explicit that the virtuous person has the right amount of emotions and that it is only the excessiveness of emotions that is blameworthy, it seems to follow easily that, *if* there is a respect in which the theater-goers' emotions could need a sort of cleansing, it is the excessive amount of his or her emotions. The idea would be, then, that the poetic *katharsis* cleans or purifies the spectators' emotions in that it abolishes their excessive amount and leaves behind the moderate and virtuous amount of emotions. The Enlightenment philosopher Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), one of the main supporters of this kind of reading, actually says that in the course of *katharsis* the passions are turned into virtuous attainments.

The competing classic reading of the Aristotelian *katharsis* goes with the alternative construction of the genitive: it assumes that in the course of the *katharsis* the spectator of the tragedy experiences something like a discharge of his emotional state and will, in the end, be released *from* emotional excitement – just as a patient can be released *from* toxic or inflammatory liquids by venesection or similar treatments. The originator of this reading, Jacob Bernays (1824–1881), an uncle by marriage of Sigmund Freud, draws heavily on the medical use of *katharsis* and argues that poetical *katharsis* is itself like a medical treatment of a pathological state. Bernays looks for support in this reading to Aristotle's *Politics*, where *katharsis* is mentioned in the context of pathological states and explicitly compared to healing. Also, Bernays and other supporters of the medical interpretation pointed out that, for Aristotle, emotions are bodily alterations and must hence be treated like any other abnormal bodily phenomenon.

Both readings have problems of their own. The ethical reading seems to presuppose a vulgar reading of Aristotle's doctrine that virtue is a mean and requires a middle amount of emotions. For Aristotle this means no more than that the virtuous person has emotions in an appropriate way, that is, has them when she should, for whom she should, and for the reasons why she should. The appropriateness depends on characteristics of the agent and of the particular situation; there is, however, no absolute amount of emotions which defines the right mean for all possible agents. The ethical reading, as sketched by Lessing, has to assume such an absolute amount of excessive emotions (in all or the majority of spectators) which tragedy reduces to an average or medium level of emotionality. This latter idea can be found in certain versions of Aristotelianism (it is called *metriopatheia* – middle emotions as opposed to the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*: see below), but not in Aristotle's ethics. And more generally, the ethical reading just presupposes that tragedy is meant to have a moral-pedagogical effect. Why is this so? The fact that Aristotle is the author

of famous books on ethics by no means implies that he wishes to assign a moral purpose to each and every cultural practice. Bernays' pathological reading has also its problems. It draws heavily on a passage in Aristotle's *Politics* where *katharsis* is compared with healing (*Pol.* VIII.7, 1342a8–11); however, this is just a comparison and the passage is not even about tragedy. Also, why should we think that Aristotle regards emotions like pathological states or like something by which one gets polluted or intoxicated? Bernays and his followers keep emphasizing that Aristotle describes emotions as bodily alterations. This is true, but it does not imply that *katharsis* is primarily seen as a physiological and not as psychological effect. After all, the arousal of the emotions of pity and fear did not make use of the somatic aspects of these emotions; why, then, should we expect the solution and the calming down of the same emotions primarily to utilize the somatic features of an emotion?

Scholars who try to work out alternatives to the ethical and to the pathological reading usually refer to the passage in the *Politics* that was the crown witness for the pathological interpretation by Bernays. This passage in book VIII starts off with the question of whether and how melodies and rhythms can be used for pedagogical purposes, and notes – very much like Plato in the *Republic* – that melodies and rhythms can imitate emotions and types of character and can thus also affect the emotional state of the listener. However, he slightly broadens the scope of philosophical consideration of music in that he takes into account that music can not only be useful for pedagogical purposes, but also for recreation, amusement, relaxation, and therapy. In the passage mentioned above he does mention the quasi-pathological case of people who fall into a state of mystic or religious frenzy and can be relieved by certain melodies; however, he does not generalize this particular case, but rather uses it to illustrate the more widespread non-pathological case:

> Those who are influenced by pity or fear, and every emotional nature, must have a like experience, and others in so far as each is susceptible to such emotions, and all are in a manner relieved [*katharsis*] and their souls eased [*kouphizesthai*] together with a feeling of pleasure. In a similar manner the melodies that refer to actions bring about an innocuous pleasure to mankind.
>
> (1342a11–6; tr. B. Jowett, slightly altered)

People who undergo episodes of pity and fear and other emotions can be eased and relieved by certain melodies. This seems to be the sort of impact of passionate melodies that Aristotle wishes to highlight and which he describes as *katharsis* or ease. It comes together with a feeling of pleasure; and just like the pleasure that is effected by a certain type of melody, namelu the melodies that are referred to actions, this kind of pleasure is an innocuous one. All this is very much compressed, but Aristotle seems to think that such a pleasant

relief from certain strained passionate states is one of the possible benefits that we gain from the use of music. The use of *katharsis* in this passage seems to refer to the quality of experience we have when we are relieved from such states, and does not imply, as both the ethical and the pathological reading do, that anything has been enhanced or improved (as, for example, the quality of emotions, the character or the physical state of the spectator). Still, the entire passage is about music and not about tragedy, so that it is uncertain to what extent this use can be applied to the *katharsis* of the drama; but at any rate it offers an example of a use of *katharsis* that is closely related to the pleasant experience we undergo when states of pity and fear are solved or calmed down – and this is comparable to the setting that we can infer from the *katharsis* formula in the *Poetics*. In contrast to Plato's stance in the *Republic* to the effects of music and poetry, it is also significant to highlight that there are pleasures – aesthetic ones – that are at least "innocent." And once one undertakes to explore the possibility that the Aristotelian *katharsis* of tragedy could, in principle, refer to a pleasant relief from the painful emotions of pity and fear, it is worthwhile to compare the passage from the *Politics* with Aristotle's description of the tragic pleasure that he gives in chapter 14 of the *Poetics*: "for it is not every pleasure, but the appropriate one, which should be sought from tragedy. And since the poet ought to provide the pleasure which derives from pity and fear by means of mimesis, it is evident that this ought to be embodied in the events of the plot" (*Poet.* 14, 1453b10–4; tr. S. Halliwell).

The kind of pleasure that is considered appropriate for tragedy is the one that derives from pity and fear by means of *mimēsis*. Unfortunately, this formula is ambiguous again. It could mean that we feel the pleasure that is produced by *mimēsis* – even while we are feeling pity or fear. However, pity and fear are supposed to be painful experiences – does Aristotle try to say that in the peculiar case of aesthetic experience people take pleasure in what would be painful in real life? This is one way of reading this passage. An alternative reading would try to align this formula with what we know from *Politics* VIII, that is, that the relief from pity and fear is a pleasant experience. Accordingly, one could argue that the pleasure mentioned here in the *Poetics* is the pleasure that follows from the termination of pity and fear; if something like this is meant here, the passage would by and large describe the same process that we know from the *katharsis* formula: that tragedy first arouses the emotions of pity and fear and finally relieves us of them, which is – as we can add now – an easing and, hence, pleasant experience.

Tragedies and Emotions in the Roman World

In the Roman world Horace's *Ars Poetica* holds a similar place as Aristotle's *Poetics* in Greek culture. In the famous slogan that the poet either wishes to profit or to delight (*aut prodesse … aut delectare*), or to deliver at once both the pleasures and the necessaries of life (v. 333–4), he clearly endorses a

pleasant and emotional effect of poetry. It is not sufficient for the work of poetry, he says, to be beautiful; it should also be capable of moving the hearers and of bringing their souls to wherever the poet wants – to laughter, crying, mourning, joking, anger, and so forth (v. 98–107). He also addresses the question of how to depict a hero, such as Achilles, as irascible and inexorable (v. 120–2). It clearly follows, then, that the topic of emotions and of the emotional impact of poetry is present and prominent in Horace; even so, emotions are not as essential as in Aristotle's *katharsis* formula. More precise references to the Aristotelian emotions of pity and fear can also be found in the texts of the Roman rhetoricians (e.g. Cicero, *De Oratore* II. 189 and III. 215; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* VI. 2, *passim*).

When it comes to philosophical reflections about the arts and their impact on the human soul, the Greek legacy manifested itself through the continuing influence of the great philosophical schools, the Academy, Aristotle and the Peripatetics, Epicurus and Epicureans, and, above all, the Stoa. And though many of the great Roman philosophers and intellectuals see themselves as eclectic, selecting and adapting ingredients of various philosophical schools, the influence of variations of Stoic philosophy is often prevalent – especially with regard to the theory of emotions. The Stoic attitude to emotions is different from Aristotle's, most notably in that they do not distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate, moderately or excessively felt emotions, but see all emotions, all *pathē*, as similarly bad and contrary to the highest good. For the early Stoa, an emotion is an excessive impulse which is contrary to the dictates of reason (Long/Sedley 65 A). It is generated when we give our approval to an impulse for ends that are not strictly speaking good or virtuous. For example, when we approve of a desire for something that seems to be pleasant in the future, the resulting emotion will become excessive and will disrupt our rationality, since it cannot be stopped or controlled anymore – just as someone who starts running, but then will not be able to stop at will. This is why emotions are seen as a disturbance within our soul; they are opposed to the ideal of an emotionally undisturbed life: *apatheia* – the absence of any emotion. Also, whereas Plato and Aristotle tend to deal with phenomena of irrationality by appealing to several parts of the soul, the early Stoa tries to model the emotions as occurring by way of conflict within the same monolithic soul that is also responsible for making rational judgments; even the emotions themselves are called "fresh beliefs" or judgments (Long/Sedley 65 C) – since, after all, they depend on our explicit approval. Emotions are irrational, then, not because they originate in a non-rational part of the soul, but, first, in that they rest on a false judgment (false, because they approve the impulse and its end as if they were good, though they are definitely not), and, second, in that they have the tendency to get out of control. It is for this latter reason that in the context of Stoic philosophy episodes of emotions are also compared to or even equated with temporary states of madness.[7]

In the light of this orthodox account of Stoic emotions, with its ideal of a life that is free of disturbances of the soul, one should expect that Stoic philosophers would never endorse a practice like tragedy which is famous for its power to arouse strong emotions in a great number of people. This, at least, is the theory; the historical reality, however, seems to be much more complex. Chrysippus, a main representative of early Stoic philosophy, is said to have been an admirer of Euripides' tragedies; according to Diogenes Laërtius (VII.180), Chrysippus quoted almost the complete text of Euripides' *Medea* in one of his works. A possible reason for this interest might be that he found in the character of Medea (who is aware that she is going to do something wrong, but nevertheless stays to be overpowered by her vengefulness) the kind of inner conflict that, according to his own teaching, leads to the generation of emotions.

Probably the most interesting figure for the question of how Stoic philosophy might be reconciled with an interest in tragedy is Seneca, who was both a Stoic philosopher and a great dramatist. As a philosopher he dedicated an entire treatise to the emotion of anger (*De ira*), in which he vividly describes the disastrous, sometimes even war-inducing effects of this particular emotion. As a dramatist he seems to follow the example of Euripides who had a reputation for depicting his heroes as being caught up in a whirlwind of passion. Because of the apparent conflict between the goals of a Stoic philosopher (as he presents himself most impressively in *De ira*) and the emotional effect of tragedies, it has even been doubted that Seneca the philosopher and Seneca the tragedian was actually one and the same person. On closer examination, however, it seems that there are several connections between Seneca's philosophy and his dramas – though the precise nature of this relation is still a matter of dispute.[8] To begin with, it might be rewarding for a Stoic philosopher to use the tragic storyline as a kind of cautionary tale by depicting the tragic heroes as acting in a state of uncontrolled emotions. This might be called the "apotropaic" function of tragedy: to warn the audience against the disastrous consequences of surrendering oneself to irrational passions. At least, some of Seneca's dramas, such as *Medea*, *Phaedra*, *Agamemnon*, and *Thyestes*, might be meant to have such an effect. This deterrent function, however, would offer only a relatively general connection with the goals of Stoic philosophy. Some interpreters therefore tried to identify a more substantial echo of the Stoic philosophy in some of the comments and warnings expressed either by the chorus or by certain characters of a drama. For example, in the *Medea* there is a nurse who describes the visible symptoms of Medea's emotional state in a very vivid way that comes close to a philosophical characterization (v. 382–390).

Still, one could object that the emotions that are enacted on stage will probably have a similar emotional impact on the spectators and that, from a Stoic point of view, such an excitement of the soul must be an unwelcome

consequence. Concerning the liberal arts in general, Seneca complains that none of them liberates us from our fear, relieves us from our desires, or delimits our libido (*Epistulae* 88, 3). How can he then approve of a practice that is likely to increase our emotional excitement? This is the place where one of Seneca's most significant contributions to the Stoic account of emotions comes in. Seneca (probably influenced by the unorthodox views of the Stoic philosopher Posidonius, who tried to combine the Stoic theory of emotions with Plato's model of the tripartite soul) suggests that in the generation of a particular episode of emotion we have to distinguish three successive stages, the first of which consists in an involuntary impulse (*ictus*); it is only after this first impulse, at the second stage, that we are able to (voluntarily) assent or dissent to this spontaneous movement; by the third stage, the emotions have already got out of our control (*De ira* II.4). What happens to the spectator of a stage play, Seneca explains (*De ira* II.2), is like the first stage of an emotion, which is not yet an emotion itself, but the beginning of or the prelude to a full-fledged emotion. What we experience in theater is only this first impulse – like the shiver when being splatted with cold water, like a sudden vertigo when facing a profound abyss, like spontaneous blushing or sexual erection – and this impulse, he says, is no more anger than it is sorrow (*tristitia*, corresponding to pity) or fear (*timor*). It is only when we succumb to these impulses (and assent to them) that a full-fledged emotion is generated. Seneca's three-stage model of emotions thus opens the possibility that we are affected in the theater in some particular way and that we deal with this initial affection in one way or the other without having the kind of emotion that the Stoics see as irrational. The gap thus provided between the initial affection that the theater-goer inevitably experiences and the full-fledged harmful stage of an emotion leaves room for ideas about aesthetic pleasures and pains and the virtually beneficial impact of tragedy.

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FURTHER READING

Stanford (1983) provides a very readable survey on the role of emotions in Greek tragedy. For discussions of particular types of emotions, see Konstan (2006). A stimulating treatment of some aspects discussed in connection with Plato's *Republic* can be found in Moss (2007). For the study of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Halliwell (1986) and Halliwell (2002) are indispensable reads; Halliwell (2003) offers a very condensed summary of problems concerning the interpretation of Aristotelian *katharsis*. Historical testimonies of the notorious debates about Aristotelian *katharsis* are collected in Luserke (1991). The specific pleasures that are involved in tragedy are treated in Heath (2003). For the philosophical impact of Seneca's tragedies one should consult Chaumartin (2014), Fischer (2014), Gill (1997), Schiesaro (1997) and Staley (2010).

NOTES

1 The following list (together with some particular examples) is based on W.B. Stanford's (1983) account, which distinguishes the aural element (including song, music, noises, cries, and silences on the one hand and what he calls "the music of the spoken word" on the other), the visual element, vocabulary and stylistic figures, and elements concerning the subject matter, imagery, irony, and the structure of the plot.

2 For a more comprehensive review with references see Stanford (1983, 85–8).

3 Again, the list that follows draws on the survey by W.B. Stanford (1983, 21–48). A more extensive depiction of particular types of emotions in Aristotle and in Classical literature can be found in Konstan (2006).

4 For the Epicureans see Lucretius III. 152–8; for the Stoics see Nemesius, 78. 7 – 79. 2 (= Long/Sedley 45 C).

5 "By *pathos* I mean desire [*epithumia*], anger, fear, courage, envy, joy, friendship [*philia*] and in general everything that is followed by pleasure and pain." (*Nicomachean Ethics* II.5, 1105b21–3).

6 Translators seem to be at loss how to translate this unusual occurrence of *ideai*; what Aristotle refers to in this passage are the particular descriptions of the several aspects of the emotions (in which state of mind we feel them, toward whom, and for what reasons). These descriptions are also referred to as a peculiar sort of specific *topoi*. An alternative rendering for these specific *topoi* is *eidē* or *ideai*. Hence, I take it that *ideai* in the passage of

the *Poetics* mentioned here accurately refer to these specific *topoi* about emotions in the *Rhetoric*. For this issue see also Rapp (2007, 2009).

7 For passions as madness see Gill (1997).

8 Valuable contributions to this dispute can be found in Gill (1997), Schiesaro (1997), Chaumartin (2014), Fischer (2014), and Staley (2010).

CHAPTER 30
Laughter

Ralph M. Rosen

This chapter examines how laughter was conceptualized by ancient Greek and Roman authors within, and as a response to, various comic literary genres. These authors reveal a coherent set of ancient attitudes about laughter which reflect a number of specific aesthetic problems and anxieties associated with it. The second part addresses the philosophical discourse about laughter found in Plato and Aristotle. Like many other philosophers of Classical antiquity after them, these two were profoundly aware of the complexity of laughter, and understood that the artistic mechanisms for drawing laughter from an audience were nearly always fraught with the potential for misunderstanding, and, in some cases, even danger.

Laughter, like other physiologically rooted human behaviors such as eating or sleeping, is both thoroughly naturalized and continually problematized. Sometimes humans laugh unselfconsciously and reflexively, feeling pleasure and a sense of communal euphoria, but just as often they find themselves anxious about the social consequences of laughter, which can be complex and conflicting. We can eat or sleep alone, for example, but laughter does not commonly occur in isolation; it is typically defined as a biological response to some kind of social interaction, and its "work," whether explained by human evolution or more circumscribed cultural practices, more often than not involves interpersonal relationships. Laughter can solidify bonds between individuals or communities, it can persuade, cajole, or reassure, but it can also draw lines of inclusion and exclusion, attack and demean. In short, laughter in everyday life can be plotted along various axes, from positive to negative, intimate to public, secular to sacred, and so on. It is a rich, often perplexing phenomenon to study in any historical period, but especially so for Classical antiquity, where the abundant evidence must always be mediated by the interpretive challenges that come with historical distance.

It may be impossible (and unproductive) to judge whether laughter was any more important to the lives of the Greeks and Romans than to other people, but *that* it was important to them, and that they were often highly self-conscious of its importance, is undeniable and uncontroversial. The evidence comes in various forms from representations of laughter in literary and historical texts, from iconography, or philosophical theorizing – and offers a reasonably full sense of how laughter was assimilated into a whole range of human activities. We find, for example, joking laughter between friends, the laughter of religious ritual, laughter in the courtroom orchestrated by orators

for forensic purposes, the laughter of symposia and other festive gatherings – sometimes benign and playful, sometimes edgy and dangerous. There is the laughter of the various literary genres that exist expressly to make people laugh: comic drama, from the ragtag array of buffoons, comic heroes, and absurd choruses in Greek Old Comedy to the more orderly plots of Greek New Comedy, and then their transmutation into Roman Comedy; or, the line of non-dramatic satirical forms, such as Archaic Greek iambus, Hellenistic iambic experiments, Roman satire, and the various Roman hybrids we find in such works as Horace's *Epodes*, Catullus, Martial's *Epigrams*, Petronius' *Satyricon*, or the Priapic corpus. Clearly there was no shortage of performances to attend, or literature to read, which would be evaluated by their success in producing laughter in an audience. If the phenomenon itself of laughter writ large in Greco-Roman antiquity is reasonably accessible – and scholars have done much, especially in recent years, to describe and organize it across the many experiential realms in which it occurred (see e.g. Trédé-Boulmer et al. 1998; Desclos 2000; Clarke 2007; Halliwell 2008; Beard 2014) – trying to sort out what it actually *meant* for people is considerably less straightforward, if only because the obvious questions this raises can often only be answered inferentially: meaning *for whom*? From whose perspective? On what occasion? There is far less explicit commentary by ancient authors about the function or desirability of laughter than there are simple examples of people laughing or saying things to make people laugh.

Our focus in this chapter will be an even narrower subset of the ancient discourse about laughter, namely, the evidence from Greek and Roman poets and philosophers about the role of laughter in the poetic performative and literary arts. We will be concerned specifically with how laughter was assimilated into these genres, and, in particular, whether laughter, once aestheticized as part of an artistic work, was conceptualized differently and functioned differently from the laughter of everyday life. Laughter in the arts is representational, mimetic; it presupposes audiences and readers who inhabit a different reality from that of the author, his characters and plots. Further, genre itself helps calibrate an audience's attitude toward laughter; laughter will obviously be anticipated in traditionally comic genres, for example, and, indeed, may exist there in exaggerated ways that have very little to do with real life, while in other genres – tragedy or lament, for example – one would expect it to appear rarely, if at all.

This chapter will be divided into two major parts. The first will examine several key passages from Greek and Latin poetry that have special resonance for the question at hand. One could choose many others as well or instead, but these will be particularly useful as a means of establishing a coherent set of ancient attitudes, along with the specific problems and anxieties that accompanied them, about the aesthetics of laughter. The second part will address the philosophical discourse about laughter that we find in Plato and

Aristotle. What we will find is that, at the highest level, both the literary and philosophical authors were profoundly aware of the complexity of laughter, and understood that the artistic mechanisms for drawing laughter from an audience were nearly always fraught with the potential for misunderstanding, in some cases even danger.

This may seem a strong claim to make about a phenomenon that is traditionally associated with positive ideas and emotions such as happiness, joy, or well-being, but, as we will see, so much of the ancient evidence for an aesthetics of laughter ultimately points in this direction. There are several reasons why this might be so, but perhaps the main one is the nature of laughter itself as a physiological reflex not always in our control. Scientists still do not claim to understand fully its mechanisms or significance,[1] and ancient thinkers were no less mystified.[2] What this means is that no one – neither author nor audience – has full control over what will produce laughter or who will laugh; often people themselves cannot explain why they end up laughing at something or someone in a work. Indeed the very corporeality of laughter makes it bizarrely unlike any other response authors come to expect from their work.[3] Tragedy may make spectators cry, for example – and crying itself is also a physical response – but tragedy's success does not *depend* on crying. Comic genres, by contrast, *do* depend on the bodily effect of laughter, even if, in the event, it is only mild or "felt" rather than "performed" by the spectator or reader. This unpredictability and irrationality of the laughter response frequently troubled ancient thinkers, and accounts for much of the ambivalence that often surrounded ancient accounts of laughter and the comic arts (Halliwell 2008, 8–9). The literary passages that follow will help us tease out what it was about laughter exactly that made it so susceptible to misfire and misinterpretation, even as it also offered its well-known promise of simple play and unmediated euphoria.

Greek Symposiarchs on Laughter

Perhaps the one ancient custom most commonly associated with laughter and the many moods and emotions that follow from laughter was the symposium – the formalized drinking party that originated in Greece, but spread as well to other parts of the ancient Mediterranean world (see Murray 1995 ; Collins 2005) Symposia could take many forms, but all strove to create an atmosphere of good cheer and revelry. Plenty of wine and food were consumed, plenty of conversation was welcome, and its classic form, at least, also featured organized entertainment, whether in the form of drinking games or performances of poetry and music. Much of the ancient testimony about the symposium makes it clear that jesting, banter, mockery, and other forms of verbal humor were common and expected between and among participants.

An anonymous elegy from (probably) the late fourth century offers a veritable taxonomy of the kinds of humor one might have encountered at a symposium:[4]

Greetings, fellow drinkers! […] I begin with a good speech,
and will conclude with a good speech.
And whenever we come together as friends for this sort of an event,
we should laugh and play in accordance with excellence,
take pleasure in our coming together, and insult
and jeer each other in such a way as to bring laughter.
But let seriousness follow, and let us listen to one another speaking
in turn: this is the *aretē* ["excellence"] of the symposium.
Let us obey the drinking-leader;
for this is how good men behave, and it brings them good report.

(*Eleg. adesp*. Fr. 27W)

The poem is a call, possibly in the voice of the host himself, to fellow symposiasts – men who are already friends (l. 3) – to get in the appropriate frame of mind for the imminent revel. Soon it will be party-time, the speaker says, and everyone can look forward to an evening of raillery, comic performance, and laughter. The goal of the evening will be pleasure (l. 5), and much of this pleasure will come from play and laughter. The specific Greek vocabulary foreshadows several comic modes: "to laugh," "to play, joke," "to insult" (here, more like banter than overt aggression), "to mock so as to produce laughter." The evening would seem to promise the kind of joking that Freud, in his 1905 study *The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious*, usefully separated into the two categories, tendentious and non-tendentious.[5] Much of the laughter envisioned in this poem would come from tendentious humor, as the Greek word *skōptein* ("to jeer at") in line 6 – the common Greek term for personal mockery – suggests. The notion of "coming together to insult and jeer at each other" (5–6) is somewhere in between; the Greek word translated here as "insult" (*phluarein*) could indicate mere benign silliness, but "towards one another" (*es allēlous*) clearly shows these jokes were targeted at specific individuals present at the festivities. *Phluaria* may end up as mockery, it seems, but it was probably a gentler mockery than that indicated by *skōptein.*

At first glance this poem feels light and upbeat, and expresses the thrill of revelry found in so many other ancient descriptions of the symposium. But it is a very measured, qualified injunction to make merry, and several times emphasizes the importance of restraint and decorum. The lines are, essentially, protreptic: one "should" (4), it is true, laugh and play, but one must do so according to the proper protocols of the occasion, which the poet here refers to as its "excellence" (its *aretē*, l. 4). At lines 7–8, after mentioning the laughter of mockery, he notes that this should be accompanied by

"seriousness" (*spoudē*), by which he presumably means that one must take seriously the rules of the game – taking turns, taking the cues from the drinking-master and making sure not to let the laughter and mockery get out of control (7–10). Such, he concludes, is the "excellence" of a symposium. Behind all these reminders to play by the rules lies the fundamental anxiety about the very nature of laughter itself that pervades so much of Greco-Roman culture – its unintelligibility, its associations with physicality – and the feeling that in the end there is really no such thing as "innocent" humor.

Classical literature offers no shortage of examples of what happens when symposiastic rules are not, in fact, followed, and bad things happen. One thinks, for example, of the story of Hippocleides in Herodotus (6.129–130) whose indecent dance in a fit of drunken revelry ruined his chance at a high-class marriage with the daughter of the tyrant Cleisthenes, or of the fate of Thersites, as recounted in the post-Homeric *Aethiopis*. Thersites, far better known as the clownish agitator who inveighs against Agamemnon in Homer, *Iliad* 2, in this part of his story is actually killed by Achilles after mocking him for falling in love with Penthesilea, possibly at a symposium (cf. Blok 1995, 195–210; Rosen 2007, 67–116; Fantuzzi 2013, 271–279). Symposia are particularly volatile occasions because people are so often drunk and muddled that minds are less likely to follow the markers that tell them how to interpret the comic speech and joking that fly around them. But even in other performative genres intended to produce laughter where the audience might be expected to be largely sober (Greek or Roman comic drama, for example), it was not always clear how the audience would respond to a given joke and authors ultimately had little control over the an audience's sense of humor (see below). Poetic genres function analogously to the symposiarch's rules – they offer cues about proper behavior for the audience – and *comic* poetic genres have the more specific task of orchestrating – or we should say more accurately, *attempting* to orchestrate – the kinds of laughter produced in response to the work. Symposiasts know that once the doors close behind them, new rules of behavior will apply as a new world of laughter and revelry comes into being; audiences of comic drama likewise enter the theater with expectations of humor and laughter – their own, and that of others. But neither symposiastic rules nor poetry's generic cueing can always guarantee who will laugh, why, and how.

A passage in Plutarch's *Lycurgus* (12.6), describing a Spartan version of a symposium, their *syssitia*, addresses exactly this problem. Plutarch here describes how children would attend these events in order to learn *sophrosynē* and politics, but in addition, he notes, they would become accustomed to the joking and mockery traditional on such occasions. Specifically, they are to get used to mocking others "without buffoonery" (*aneu bōmolochias*), and to receive mockery without taking it "the wrong way" (*skōptomenoi mē duscherainein*), as we might say. Plutarch notes how characteristic

symposiastic mockery was of Spartan culture: “for this quality too seemed to be very Spartan, namely, to be able to endure mockery.” But here too, there was a provision for the possibility that not everyone *could* in fact withstand it: “but if someone couldn’t bear it, it was possible for him to request a reprieve, and the mocker would stop.”

The regulation of behavior intended to produce laughter in an audience (including symposiasts) that we see in both the elegy and in Plutarch’s Spartan parties appears, then, as rudimentary steps toward an aesthetics of laughter. It was not the case in Greek culture that “anything goes” with humor, and there was considerable self-consciousness about what constituted not only acceptable or unacceptable joking from a social or moral perspective, but also “good” or “bad” joking (or comic play, etc.), from a purely aesthetic one. Not every laugh indicated a “good” joke, as it happened, and Greek (and Roman) poets came to apply the same sort of scrutiny to, and manipulation of, their own comic material as symposiarchs would have. And it was the poets who also had to be attuned to the comic aesthetics of their audiences – what “played,” and what would not.

Aristophanes and the Taxonomy of Laughter

Such attention to aesthetics, moreover, did not only apply to the more aggressive forms of humor (mockery, and other kinds of tendentious joking). We have evidence as early as Classical Athens of how comic poets thought about even innocent, inconsequential joking, and how they assessed such humor in accordance with the kinds of laughter they produced in an audience. One clear example of this kind of concern can be seen in the opening lines of Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, where Dionysus and his slave Xanthias converse metatheatrically about different types of jokes and their effects on the audience:

> Xanthias:
>
> Master, should I tell one of those typical jokes which the audience always laughs at?
>
> Dionysus:
>
> By Zeus, you can tell whatever you want, except “I’m hard pressed”; Watch out for that one, it’s incredibly infuriating!
>
> Xanthias:
>
> And not some other witty thing?
>
> Dionysus:

Well, anything but “Oh, I’m so squeezed!”

Xanthias:

What then? Can I say the one that’s really funny?

Dionysus:

Sure, go for it – only don’t say that one …

Xanthias:

Which one?

Dionysus:

The one where you shift your bags and say you need to take a shit.

Xanthias:

Well, can’t I even say that I’m so loaded down that I’ll fart up a storm if someone doesn’t relieve me?

Dionysus:

No, please don’t, unless you want to do that when I’m about to puke.

Xanthias:

But why then did I have to carry all these bags, if I’m not supposed to make any of the jokes that Phrynichus does; and Lycis and Ameipsias – they have people carrying bags in their comedies all the time!

Dionysus:

Just don’t! Since when I’m in the audience myself and hear any of these “witty” jokes, I go away older by a year.

(Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1–11)

The scene functions as an extended *praeteritio* – Dionysus forbids Xanthias from telling a series of what he considers especially lowbrow jokes, but in so doing the jokes are told after a fashion and the audience can laugh at them along the way. Although the entire conversation between the two characters is clearly ironic, it plays with the notion that there are better and worse ways of making an audience laugh, and implies that the mark of a good comic poet is the ability to avoid crass humor when working with common, generically indicated scenes – here, the unhappy slave loaded down with baggage. Normally, as the scene suggests, audiences laugh at physical or scatological jokes, but Dionysus wants Xanthias to be on his guard against such humor (4). The “really funny one” (6) turns out to be the most graphic joke, with

"shitting" as the punch line (8). Xanthias' conclusion is that it is simply impossible to write an abject porter scene without this kind of humor, and he laments (12–13) that Dionysus' veto of such jokes (the kind of jokes that other comic poets get away with) has stifled his ability to complain and effectively made such scenes pointless. When Dionysus imagines himself as a member of the audience sitting through and disapproving of these *sophismata* ("clever-isms"), as he calls them, he has in mind a specific comic aesthetics, one that distinguishes (however disingenuously) between the unworthy laughter of the common crowds, and the discriminating laughter of the sophisticated spectator.

This is a theme that Aristophanes had taken up some years earlier in the revised parabasis of his *Clouds*, in which the poet responds to the failure of its original performance in 423 BC. At issue here is nothing less than the fundamental question of what a comic drama should be – what its humor should "do" and what constitutes "good" or "bad" laughter. Although it is the chorus leader who speaks the lines of the parabasis, he is clearly chaneling the voice of the poet, indignant that the audience of 423 did not recognize the merit of the first version of the play:

And then, defeated by vulgar men,
I lost the competition, though I didn't deserve that. So for that I blame you sophisticated men, on whose account I was working so hard.

(Aristophanes, *Clouds* 524–526)

The rest of the parabasis lays out exactly what distinguishes the kind of humor sophisticated audiences (such as his own) appreciate from the kind that everyone else seems to want. Holding up his first play, *Banqueters* (produced in 427), as a example of his own type of comedy, Aristophanes tries to set it apart from the most popular fare by listing the kinds of jokes it avoids, which consist here largely of grotesque sight-gags (e.g. exaggerated phalluses), physical humor (characters brandishing sticks, beatings), and cheap shots at obvious targets (such as bald men, with its likely joke about Aristophanes himself):

> But consider how modest she is by nature, who has come first of all, not having stitched on a leather phallus hanging down, red at the tip and thick, so as to make the children laugh; nor has she made fun of bald-headed people, nor danced the cordax [a lascivious dance]; nor does an old character beat the person next to him with his walking-stick as he speaks his lines, in order to cover up his terrible jokes; nor has she rushed on to the stage carrying torches, nor does she shout out "ow ow!" No, in fact, she has come relying only on herself and her lines.
>
> (Aristophanes, *Clouds* 537–544)

Aristophanes' complaint here involves both simple, non-tendentious, jokes

that will raise a laugh with a visual cue or punch line, and aggressive mockery. He has no objection to these *kinds* of humor – this is not an argument, in other words, against comedy or laughter – only to *bad* versions of them. The lines that immediately follow (545–549), in fact, sum up his claim to comic quality: his plays are superior because they feature characters who are inherently well-conceived and who are given good *lines* to speak. His plays, moreover, are innovative, he says, and original (547), but they are also every bit as vituperative as any of his rivals. Indeed, as the chorus leader/poet continues in his rant, some of his originality comes from his courage to satirize targets such as the politician Cleon as aggressively as he does (549–550): "who struck Cleon in the belly when at the height of his power, / and could not bear to attack him afterward when he was down." The reference here is to the production of *Knights*, a rambunctious sustained attack on Cleon, which won first prize at the Lenaian festival of 424. He complains (551–559) that various aspects of this play were plagiarized by rivals such as Eupolis and Hermippus, who used them against their own targets. At the conclusion of this section, Aristophanes discourages his audiences from laughing at such comic poets (560–562):

Whoever laughs at those plays, let him not enjoy mine;
But if you take pleasure in me and my innovations,
people in future times will think you had good sense.

How seriously we should take all these complaints about being misunderstood and underappreciated is always an open question, since as often as such poets stake their claim to quality and superiority over their rivals, one can find counter-examples in their own work that suggest disingenuousness.[6] But these passages illustrate well a cluster of aesthetic anxieties that we find to one degree or another in virtually all comic genres of Classical literature. Such authors are always aware that the laughter they seek to produce in their audiences is, at root, a physical, affective phenomenon, difficult to predict and manipulate. This in turn also makes it difficult to construct a spectrum of value and meaning for laughter – if one's goal is to make someone laugh, does it matter what has *caused* that laughter?[7]

Certainly Aristophanes here wants to make the claim that it does, and most other ancient comic poets make similar claims as well at some point in their work. For Aristophanes, as we can see from the passages we have examined, quality comedy can be assessed according to a distinct aesthetic hierarchy: easy, reflexive laughter in response to crass joking wears thin very quickly and reflects poorly on the audience; satirical mockery directed at personal targets is better; targets who are important and notorious (like Cleon) are better still. Next comes originality and creativity – anyone can rant against a famous politician, but the "best" mockery, according to this aesthetic calculus, draws out a *knowing* laughter from its audience, a laughter that aligns the

sophisticated tastes of the listener with those of the author. This kind of humor *is* in fact tendentious; the author believes in – or at least pretends to believe in – its satirical "cause" directed against a target, and if he can get the audience to laugh in a manner he would consider appropriate to his art, he will have succeeded in transferring to them his own elevated sensibilities. But if there is a disconnect between poet and audience, as Aristophanes complains there was after the first performance of *Clouds*, the translation of authorial humor into audience laughter fails, as does the efficacy of the poet's mockery in hitting its target.

Horace and Roman Satirical Laughter

The three overarching concerns that we see in Aristophanes – (i) regulating an audience's laughter, (ii) staking a claim to aesthetic superiority, and (iii) the desire for comic efficacy, where laughter is a means to something, not an end in itself – are hardly limited to Greek Old Comedy. If we look to a very different Classical tradition, Roman verse satire, we find many variations on a similar cluster of poetic anxieties, all of which derive from the poet's fundamental realization that an audience's laughter can have powerful and complex social consequences, both positive and negative. Our brief examination here of Horace's *Satires* will reveal an engagement with such issues remarkably similar to what we have seen in the Greek comic tradition, despite the vast differences in historical, cultural, and performative contexts. This suggests that at the most fundamental level, at least, attitudes toward laughter remained fairly consistent across comic literary traditions of Classical antiquity. Horace (65–8 BC) falls chronologically in the middle of the canon of Roman satirists, between the great *inventor* of the Latin hexameter satire, Lucilius (second century BC) and the satirists of the imperial period, Persius (AD 34–62) and Juvenal (first to second century AD). As such, Horace was able to look back self-consciously to the famously aggressive style of Lucilius, and in turn, serve as a model for his successors. Horace had plenty to say in several of his *Satires*, as we shall see, about satire as a comic genre and the difficulties comic poets face in orchestrating what they would consider appropriate laughter in their audiences.

For Horace, the history of Roman satire was essentially a history of "free speech," that is, how much can the satirist say without getting into trouble? Lucilius, Horace would note, could write with relatively little constraint; he could mock, parody, or otherwise satirize people and things with as much freedom as the poets of Old Comedy (1.4.1ff.). Horace, by contrast, felt he did not have quite the same license as Lucilius, usually blaming his audiences as much as anything else for failing to understand what satirical comedy is supposed to do. And by the time of Persius and Juvenal, a nostalgia for the *libertas* of Lucilius and Horace had to be tempered by the fear of alienating a succession of repressive, often unstable emperors who did not take well to

criticism. All these poets, to one degree or another, had to confront the problem of a literary form that existed to make people laugh, but at the same time *claimed* that this laughter had a purpose, whether it was to expose corrupt politicians or, more simply, the misbehavior of fellow citizens for their follies and peccadilloes. The tension that this creates is profound, for, as we have seen with the Greek material, the artistic means by which one produces laughter do not always align with the promotion of a "serious" agenda. Situations arise in which comedy seems to trump (non-comic) meaning … and vice versa. Even when the rules of the game are reasonably well articulated and audiences had a decent chance of understanding the generic cueing that directed their comic response – such as in the case of the Greek symposium or Athenian comic drama – there was always room, as we have seen, for things to run off the rails. Roman satire was even more fraught since it was less tied to performance occasion than its Greek relatives, and so all the more susceptible to miscontrual by readers who cannot benefit, as spectators can, from sharing the experience with a community in real time. We hardly need the corroboration of scientific studies to persuade us that laughter is a highly social phenomenon that binds groups together in affective, rather than deliberative, ways.

Horace wrote several programmatic satires that pointedly addressed the problems of tendentious humor, especially the constant threat in such genres of a disconnect between poet and audience. At *Sat*. 1.4.32–34, for example, Horace complains that the satirist's targets, upset at being ridiculed, make people think that satirists are cruel, even mad:

All these people hate poetry, they hate poets.
"He has hay in his horns, stay well clear from him!
As long as he can raise a laugh for himself, he won't spare any friend …"

After an ironic digression (36–63) about whether satire really can be considered poetry at all when it is so stylistically scrappy and unelevated, Horace returns to the question of whether satire is rightly "distrusted" by people. The approach he takes is reminiscent of Aristophanes' literary self-defense in the parabasis of *Clouds*, which likewise stresses that he is trying to please a discriminating few rather than pander to the low tastes of the masses. In Horace's version we have an image of him reading his poems – and reluctantly, he claims! – only to his friends, contrasted to the man who reads indiscriminately in the forum or the public baths:

No stall or pillar will ever have my little books on display
to be mauled by the sweaty hands of Hermogenes Tigellius and the mob;
and I never give readings except to friends – and then only
when pressed – not *anywhere* and to *any* audience. There are numerous people

who read their work in the middle of the public square, or in the baths
(a lovely resonance is obtained from the enclosed space). Empty
heads enjoy it, never reflecting whether their behaviour
is ill-timed or in bad taste. (70–77, tr. Rudd)

Horace counters the charge that satirical poets are deliberately malicious by contrasting the laughter he seeks from an audience to that of what we might call a faux-satirist – the person who will attack his friends behind their backs if it will get him a good laugh and the reputation for being a wit (*dicax*):

"You like giving pain:
says a voice, "and you do it out of sheer malice." Where did you get
that slander to throw at me? Is it endorsed by any
of my circle? The man who traduces a friend behind his back,
who won't stand up for him when someone else is running him down,
who looks for the big laugh and wants to be thought a wit,
the man who can invent what he never saw but can't keep a secret
he's the blackguard; beware of *him,* O son of Rome! (77–84, tr. Rudd)

What is more, Horace continues (85–92), the satirist is actually quite like the symposiast whom everyone admires when he banters with his friends over the cups of wine; why should that person, then, be thought "charming, sophisticated and free" (*comis et urbanus liberque*), while he is thought "malicious and biting" (*lividus et mordax*) when *he* laughs at (*risi*) the ineptitudes of people who really deserve it?:

Often, when four are dining on each of the three couches,
you will notice one who throws all kinds of dirt at the rest
except for the host – and at him too, later on, when he's drunk
and the truthful god of freedom unlocks his inner heart
This is the fellow whom *you* think charming and civilized and forthright –
you, the arch-enemy of blackguards! I laughed because the fatuous
Rufillus smells of sweet cachous, Gargonius of goat.
Do you think I'm spiteful and vicious for that? (85–92, tr. Rudd)

The analogy between what he does with his satire and what happens at a symposium is revealing, for it calls attention to the need for a mechanism by which laughter can be shaped by a set of protocols, whether these are established by occasion (as in the case of a symposium) or a poetic genre such as Roman satire.

Indeed, the opening of *Satire* 2.1 addresses this problem directly, laying out the classic dilemma of any comic poet whose work aims for laughs at the expense of other people. There are, as Horace says, rules – here, a *lex* – governing genre, but no guarantee that the audience will agree how these rules actually work. Other genres, as well, carry no guarantees about how audiences

will respond to them, but ridicule and abuse are particularly charged, and carry far greater potential for risk to the poet. As Horace puts it, he really cannot win: either people think he goes too far, or not far enough:

> Some people think that I'm too sharp in my satire, and that
> my work transgresses its laws; but another group thinks whatever
> I compose is anemic, and that a thousand verses like that could be
> spun out in a single day … (*Sat.* 2.1.1–4)

The bulk of this satire proceeds to take up the question of whether this kind of poetry is simply too dangerous for the poet. There is little question that much of this is tongue-in-cheek (it is certainly amusing to imagine a satirist abandoning his craft because he is afraid of the public's reaction, and ironic, almost paradoxical, to think any satirist would actually prefer a tranquil, vice-free world where satire was not necessary – a scenario at least broached in *Sat.* 2.1), but the poem highlights the special problems that attend tendentious humor in all its forms.

Once again, it is the disconnect between a poet's intention and the audience's understanding of it that is highlighted. In the last third of *Sat*. 2.1, Horace's interlocutor, the lawyer Trebatius, registers his concern that Horace will upset one of his powerful friends if he insists on writing vituperative poetry in the manner of Lucilius (60–62). Horace's response is revealing: it begins with a predictable appeal to the fact that he only mocks people who deserve it, so people with nothing to hide have nothing to fear from him.[8] However, the closing lines of the poem suddenly shift the focus to aesthetics and the currency of laughter:

> (HOR.)
>
> Well sure, if the verses are "bad." But what if someone composes "good" verses, and he's praised with Caesar as judge? If he's barked at someone who's worthy of abuse, while he himself is blameless?
>
> (TRE.)
>
> The case will be dropped, with a laugh. You'll be dismissed unharmed.
>
> (Horace, *Sat.* 2.183–186)

The joke of this passage turns on the double entendre of *mala* and *bona*. Trebatius had said that Horace could get in trouble if his verses were *mala*, where *mala* can mean either "malicious," or simply "not good, bad," aesthetically. Horace's retort – "but that's only if the verses are 'bad' … and what if they're 'good'?" – conflates the aesthetic ("verses are either axiologically *bad* or *good*") and the descriptive ("these verses either do what they're supposed to do [= 'good'], namely, ridicule people who deserve it, or they ridicule even people who don't deserve it [= 'bad']"). So the good

satirist, who does what he's "supposed" to do *and* does it aesthetically *well*, will be vindicated by the laughter he has produced ("The case will be dropped, with a laugh. You'll be dismissed unharmed," 86), at least in the eyes of a discriminating audience, here emblematized by Caesar himself and a court of law that judges an imagined complaint of poetic malfeasance. This, then, shows comic poetry at its most successful, where its aesthetic qualities align with the appreciation and understanding of the audience, and the desired goal – laughter – is achieved.[9]

It has to be said, of course, that there was plenty of Classical literature aiming at laughter that was not satirical; even much of the humor found within satirical literature is not strictly speaking a function of its satire. We have already noted the varieties of less consequential humor in Greek Old Comedy – puns, slapstick, obscenity, for example – and other forms of humor can be catalogued as well, whether we look to the Archaic Greek iambus, Greek Middle and New Comedy, Hellenistic epigrams (many of which were comic), Greek mime, Roman comedy, the poems of Catullus, Horace's *Epodes*, Martial's epigrams (which relied on both satirical and and non-satirical humor), or the Greek prose works of Lucian. Greeks and Romans laughed in all the ways we would expect from our own experiences, but whenever we can catch a glimpse of how ancient writers self-consciously conceptualized the production of laughter, the pattern of anxieties is strikingly consistent across period and genre.[10] This consistency can be explained, it seems, by the inherently social nature of laughter and by its origins as a physiological, non-intellectual, response to an *aesthesis* of the world. So it is always the laughter of *groups* that worries authors, especially when the laughter they seek to elicit comes at the expense of another group or subgroup, whose indignation can be as reflexive and uncontrollable as the laughter they feel victimized by. Paradoxically, then, what begins as an evolutionary mechanism of social cohesion always seems to threaten the opposite, visible across antiquity, for example, in the fate of Thersites, the parabases of Aristophanes, the prologues of Terence, or the epigrams of Martial.

Plato and Aristotle on Comedy and Laughter

Given the fact that the bulk of the commentary about laughter found in the ancient poets themselves stresses its problematic aspects, it will come as no surprise to find that laughter is similarly troubling in the ancient philosophical tradition. Indeed, at the risk of overgeneralizing, it seems safe to say that laughter, and the various aesthetic means of its production in antiquity, always made ancient philosophers a little uncomfortable. At best, among the philosophers humor can be innocuous and tolerable; but it is very difficult to find any substantively positive theorizing about laughter to counterbalance their more pervasive persistent anxiety.[11] And as we shall see, these anxieties mirror precisely, if more explicitly, those we have already recovered from

ancient authors themselves.

Plato's discussion of comedy in his *Philebus* is not as lucid as we might like, but it does frame the issue in a manner that reminds us of the problems flagged by Aristophanes. In a discussion of how pleasures are often mixed with pains (and vice versa), Socrates brings up comedy (48a) with his interlocutor, Protarchus, as a case in which the soul experiences just such a mixture. The discussion is somewhat oblique, but the attitude toward comedy and laughter reasonably clear. To begin with, it is noteworthy that Socrates' notion of "comedy" assumes *tendentious* comedy, comedy that involves the ridicule of other people, making them laughable (*geloion*) and encourages spectators to take pleasure in that.[12] At 48c, further, he secures Protarchus' agreement that "the laughable" is a form of "badness" (*ponēria*), which itself, in turn, implies a lack of self-knowledge. He develops this further by explaining that when we ridicule someone, we are ridiculing them for their "false opinion about themselves," and that the emotion we feel is *phthonos* ("malice," "envy," *Schadenfreude*).[13] At 48b4, Socrates articulates the problem with this, however, in a manner that foreshadows the end of Horace *Sat*. 2.1, for it is one thing, he says, when the "laughable" are people who are "weak and unable to take revenge at being ridiculed," but another when the targets of humor are powerful. That group can fight back when mocked, and although their ignorance and self-deception are worthy of ridicule, attacking them can be dangerous (48c).

The second point Socrates wants to make in this convoluted passage is that mockery of enemies is different from mockery of friends. The former is generally acceptable, even if it involves feeling the negative emotion of *phthonos*; but it is not acceptable, Socrates says, for us to laugh at the ignorance of our friends, since their moral failings should be despised (*misēta*) not laughed at:

> So the argument states that in laughing at the laughable qualities of our friends, we are mixing pleasure with pain, since we are mixing it with *phthonos*; for [as the argument goes] it has been agreed for a long time that *phthonos* is a pain of the soul, and that laughing is a pleasure, while both are present at the same time on these occasions.

The problems Plato has with comedy, then, are informed by, on the one hand, the danger of ridiculing people who may have the power to retaliate, and, on the other, the incivility of laughing at, and taking pleasure in (49d), the faults of one's friends. *Phthonos* ("malice"), in other words, has negative social consequences, even as it seems to give pleasure to those who feel it, and it is unjust, as Socrates says at 49d4, to "rejoice in" a friend's faults rather than to "feel distress" at them. The comic poets themselves would presumably complicate Plato's analysis of the laughable by saying, first of all, that even *phthonos* against one's friends is not unjustified when the faults are real, and

second, that laughter at the expense of friends, even if gratuitous, can be pleasureable and *phthonos*-free for everyone involved, including the targets, as long as all parties do not confuse meaning-free banter with meaning-ful attack.[14]

One has the impression here and there that Plato may even have sympathized with such an attitude, as, for example, in *Rep*. 396a, where he seems to acknowledge such a thing as benign comic role-playing simply for the sake of play,[15] but for the most part Plato remains deeply skeptical of a normal human being's ability to remain psychologically unscathed by comic *mimeseis*. In his famous discussion of the guardians' education in books 2 and 3 of the *Republic*, where Plato has Socrates warn against the dangers of poetic represention, the overriding fear is that the artistic representation of bad characters and immoral behavior will encourage audiences to imitate such behavior themselves. At 395e–396a, Socrates describes what sounds like the Old Comedy of his day:

> Nor [should the guardians in training imitate], as it seems, bad men who are cowards and who do the opposite of the things we just now spoke about, verbally abusing and making fun of one another and using obscene language while drunk or sober, or all the other bad things that men like that do against themselves and others, either in their speech or in actions; and I suppose that they shouldn't get used to making themselves like madmen in their speech and actions. For they should be able to recognize men and women who are mad or bad, but they shouldn't compose any poetry about them or imitate them.

The topic is taken up again in book 10 (606c), where the injunction against poetic *mimesis* is not limited to the curriculum of the guardians but generalized for all society. After a consideration of Homeric and tragic performances, Socrates turns to "the laughable" (*to geloion*) and comic poetry, noting how people will take great pleasure in the kinds of joking that they see in comic performances that they would normally be ashamed of uttering themselves. He spells out the danger here quite specifically: in ordinary life, a person's reason will restrain him from making jokes because he does not want to be thought a buffoon, but watching comedy will make him abandon such restraint, and before he knows it, he will become a comedian at home, which is to say, a buffoon.[16]

Plato's position on laughter and comedy in the arts has often struck readers as oddly anhedonic – could he really never relax and just enjoy a joke, after all? – but he has really only given a more systematic psychological treatment to the problematic aspects of laughter that all ancient authors seemed to sense on their own. Certainly there is plenty of smiling and laughter across Plato's dialogues, and the famous "irony" of Socrates, which often gives him his satirical edge, belongs to the realm of the comic.[17] Some comedy did make its

way into Plato's philosophical world,[18] but only as a tool carefully calibrated for philosophical purposes. This is a far remove, however, from the rough-and-tumble world of the comic stage or the grauitous, aischrologic roasting of symposiastic songs. Such performances, it seems, Plato would classify as "buffoonery" (*bōmolochia*) of one sort or another, undignified, non-serious behavior with the single goal of drawing a laugh. And since he saw little value in laughter as an end itself (no doubt, again, because of its non-rational, corporeal associations), and no serious interest in its therapeutic or euthymic properties, beyond the touches of humor and comic irony found here and there throughout the dialogues, he was never fully at ease with the comic poetry of his day.

Aristotle, by contrast, took a characteristically more circumspect view of the matter, allowing that laughter and comedy were not only acceptable, but even essential for a full human life. Even so, in an important passage in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1127b33–1128b9), he explains carefully that such instances of "relaxation" (*anapausis*) or "playful amusement" (*diagōgē meta paidias*) must be regulated, at least by oneself if not by law. In keeping with his approach to other aspects of human behavior, Aristotle here too endorses a middle ground between excessive, unrestrained humor and a total lack of humor. He formulates this as follows:

> Those then who go to excess in ridicule are thought to be buffoons [*bōmolochoi*] and vulgar fellows [*phortikoi*], [19] who itch to have their joke at all costs, and are more concerned to raise a laugh than to keep within the bounds of decorum and avoid giving pain to the object of their raillery. Those on the other hand who never by any chance say anything funny themselves and take offence at those who do, are considered boorish and morose. Those who jest with good taste are called witty or versatile – that is to say, full of good turns.
>
> (1128a1–3 tr. Rackham 1934)

Like Plato, Aristotle too was concerned about *bōmolochia*, and on this point they could probably agree about the kind of comic performances that would portray such a condition. They agree, too, that "buffoonish" behavior in real life is an obstacle to a virtuous life, and buffoonish performances threaten to encourage audiences to mimic this kind of behavior. For Aristotle, too, buffoonery characterizes the person who seeks a joke for the sake of a joke, has no apparent interest in decorum, and never worries that his joking might hurt another person. But it is clear from this passage that Aristotle was conflicted about laughter and the ways in which it could be produced in life and literature.[20] He gives the term *eutrapelia* ("urbane wittiness") to jesting that is "appropriate" (*emmelōs* – a difficult word; it may have the sense of "harmonious or "tasteful"), but he knows that even this does not much help to define what this kind of humor actually is. He tries in the sentences that

follows to flesh out the *eutrapelos* man a bit more as someone who has "cleverness" (or perhaps "tactfulness," *epidexiotēs*), that is, who will only say things that befit a "reasonable" (*epieikēs*) and "free" (*eleutherios*) man:

> But as matter for ridicule is always ready to hand, and as most men are only too fond of fun and raillery, even buffoons are called witty and pass for clever fellows; though it is clear from what has been said that wit is different, and widely different, from buffoonery. The middle disposition is further characterized by the quality of tact, the possessor of which will say, and allow to be said to him, only the sort of things that are suitable to a virtuous man and a gentleman: since there is a certain propriety in what such a man will say and hear in jest, and the jesting of a gentleman differs from that of a person of servile nature, as does that of an educated from that of an uneducated man. The difference may be seen by comparing the old and the modern comedies; the earlier dramatists found their fun in obscenity, the moderns prefer innuendo, which marks a great advance in decorum.
>
> (1128a4–7, tr. Rackham 1934)

As we can see, when Aristotle tries to explain the difference between the buffoon and the witty man by comparing "the old and new comedies," he ends up a bit on the fence. As he notes, the humor of "old" comedy (which presumably aligns more or less with our own notions of Old Comedy) can be generally characterized as "obscene" (*aischrologia*), while that of "new" comedy relied more on "innuendo" (*huponoia*) – the former, that is, more like *bōmolochia*, and the latter more refined and urbane – and the difference, he says, is a step in the direction of "decorum" (*euschēmosunē*). But he recognizes that the real problem lies in how to decide what is "unfitting" for a free man to say, and how we determine what kinds of jesting harm its targets:

> Can we then define proper mockery by saying that its jests are never unbecoming to gentlemen, or that it avoids giving pain or indeed actually gives pleasure to its object? Or is it impossible to define anything so elusive? for tastes differ as to what is offensive and what amusing.
>
> (1128a8, tr. Rackham 1934, mod.)

Aristotle's concession here that it may not really be possible to define "proper mockery" since people will always have different ideas about what is decorous or offensive, would seem to hint at a whole realm of contemporary aesthetic debate about what constituted "good" and "bad" comedy, and the relationship between form and content within such a debate. It also allows for the possibility, at least, that even though Aristotle classified categorically the aischrologic humor of Old Comedy as indecorous, he might also be able to imagine some examples of that genre retaining both their intense scurrility *and* their acceptability for the man of good breeding and taste. Such, at any rate, would be the difference between a poet like Aristophanes deploying

obscenity skillfully (however this would have been defined exactly) and a lesser poet whose language came off as simply vulgar and crude.

Aristotle spoke of laughter and comic poetry elsewhere in his works,[21] but these passages offer only minor variations of his position in the *NE*. We may wish to applaud his basic open-mindedness about the topic and his conclusion that laughter plays an important role in a balanced human life, but it is worth remembering that in most of these passages – certainly all of those outside of *Poetics* – he is still interested only in laughter as something useful, not for what we might call its intrinsic value. Aristotle approaches laughter as a form of "relaxation" or, literally, a "pause" from the serious concerns of life. Within this framework he seeks the best way for a man to relax with laughter and comedy while *doing no harm* to self or others, an attitude premised on the constant sense of lurking danger in speech and art that make people laugh. Hence the need for monitoring, self-regulation and, occasionally, he would say, legislation.[22]

The theorizing of Plato and Aristotle about the aesthetics of laughter is hardly the last word among the ancient philosophers who addressed the topic, but between the two of them they delineated the contours of the discussion that continues even to the present day, often in strikingly similar terms. As we have seen, the history of theorizing about laughter in Classical antiquity, both among literary authors and philosophers, follows a series of intertwining threads that all begin with the mystery and paradox of the phenomenon itself. On the one hand, laughter is a universally human, bodily response generally associated with euthymic feelings and social bonding. But its very physicality makes it highly idiosyncratic, dependent on an individual's temperament, and thus difficult to predict and orchestrate from without. So it is no wonder that the history of comic genres becomes also a history of anxiety about misfires and misunderstandings. For a type of art that so often portrays itself as ephemeral and frivolous, it is striking just how often the laughter of comedy seems on the verge of going awry, and how high the stakes can be when it does.[23]

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FURTHER READING

Halliwell (2008) offers a recent comprehensive overview of laughter in Greek literature and culture through late antiquity, which also subsumes much of his earlier work on this topic. For Roman laughter, see Beard 2014. For laughter in Roman visual culture, see Clarke 2007. Two useful French essay collections can be found in Trédé-Boulmer, Hoffmann, and Auvray-Assayas (1998) and Desclos (2000). Wide-ranging and eclectic, the three volumes of Jäkel and Timonen (1994, 1995, 1997), address topics from Greek and Roman literary, philosophical, cultural, and psychological perspectives. The views of Plato and Aristotle on laughter are well treated in the aforementioned studies, in addition to which one should consult Mader (1977) (on laughter in Plato) and the relevant essays in Dillon and Brisson (2010) on Plato's discussion of comedy in the *Philebus*. On Aristotle's views of comedy in the *Poetics*, Heath (1989) remains classic, if somewhat unorthodox. Destrée (2009) extends some of Heath's arguments with discussion of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. The *Tractatus Coislinianus*, thought by some to derive from Aristotle's lost second book of the *Poetics* in which he allegedly focused on comedy, has been sympathetically treated by Janko 2002 [1984], although his arguments for authenticity remain controversial.

NOTES

1 Contemporary theorizing about laughter is relatively popular among psychologists, anthropologists, and literary scholars, but less common among biologically oriented scientists. Medical claims for the therapeutic efficacy abound, although there are few empirical studies; see, for example, Hauser *et al.* (1997) and Moskowitz (2010); for other recent work on the psychology of humor and laughter, see, for example, Morreall (2009) and Fry (2010).

2 For example, Ps.-Aristotle, *Probl*. 900a24, b7–14; Cic. *De Or.* 2.235.

3 The great second-century AD medical writer, Galen, remained mystified by the physiology of laughter: see *On Problematical Movements* 10.5 (Nutton 2012, 139, 349). See also Hauser *et al.* (1997), on current thinking about the biology of laughter.

4 Recent discussion, with further bibliography, at Halliwell (2008, 114–117). The Greek word for "excellence" here may have a moral connotation, and is sometimes translated as "virtue" (e.g. Halliwell 2008, 114), implying that the symposiasts should still remain virtuous during their revelries.

5 See Freud (2002, 87–114), with Carey's introductory comments, viii, xxii. Tendentious joking was directed at something, usually another person, and usually took the form of mockery, invective, or interpersonal banter. Non-tendentious jokes, at least on the surface, floated free of any clear object or target, as we find, for example, in puns or jokes with punch lines.

6 See, for example, Dover's (1968) comment on *Clouds* 543, p. 169 ad loc.

7 In *Clouds* 550–559, for example, what Aristophanes most objects to is not so much that his rivals follow his lead in attacking prominent politicians, but that they do not know when to stop. They just keep pummeling away at targets such as Hyperbolus, with the implication that such comedy becomes just boorish and vulgar.

8 By way of illustration, Horace here notes that Laelius and Scipio, both virtuous contemporaries of Lucilius, had no objection when Lucilius ridiculed in front of them prominent men such as Lupus and Metellus, because they clearly deserved it (Sat. 2.1.65–72).

9 See further on this passage, Freudenburg (2001, 105–108).

10 This is a theme that recurs throughout Halliwell's (2008) comprehensive study of Greek laughter, but see in particular 264–276. Laughter was also a particularly fraught topic among the early Christian writers, as Halliwell shows in detail, 471–519.

11 Even the ancient tradition of Democritus as the "laughing philosopher'. (Halliwell 2008, 343–371) implies a kind of censorious laughter, directed at all the many absurdities, ironies, and hypocrises of the world. Such laughter is essentially satirical – tendentious and antagonistic, and so, like satire, designed by its very nature to leave at least some people feeling uncomfortable, chastised (if they "deserve" to be mocked) or even injured.

12 See Frede (2010, 7–8), McCabe (2010, esp. 194–196), and Gavray (2010).

13 Exactly how we are to understand Plato's notion of *phthonos* here is a matter of some debate, though it is always unquestionably negative. See, for example, Mader (1977, 15–16) and McCabe (2010).

14 It remains an open question whether there can even be such a thing as ridicule that is "meaning-free," or *phthonos*-free, even in cases where the person ridiculing insists that "no harm is intended" or that the ridicule is "all in fun." See Kidd (2011, 459), who notes the preponderance of interjections (largely drawn from the vocabulary of tragedy) indicating pain and suffering in Aristophanes as compared with the handful of words dramatizing actual laughter on the stage. His conclusion – that "suffering is the *sine qua non* of comedy" as it is for tragedy – though overstated, does affirm the importance of tendentious, *phthonos*-oriented laughter in Old Comedy.

15 Plato here uses the word *paidiá* to describe what seems to be comic mockery that is to be construed as jesting or play. See Rosen (2007, 257–258) and Halliwell (2008, 226).

16 "For that which you used to hold in check in yourself through reason when you wanted to play the fool, being afraid of a reputation for buffoonery, you then release; having made it vigorous there [i.e. in the theatre], you don't notice that you have often been carried away in your private life so that you have become a comedian" (Plato, *Rep*. 606c, tr. Murray 1996, 227).

17 See, for example, Mader (1977, esp. 33–42, 80–82), Worman (2008, 153–212; with further biblio. 154, n.5), McCabe (2010, 199–202), and Destrée (2013).

18 See deVries (1985), Halliwell (2008, 276–301), Destrée (2012).

19 It is worth noting that Aristophanes had already himself used forms of *phortikos* ("vulgar fellow") and *bōmolochia* ("buffoonery") to contrast inferior comic poetry to his own. In the parabasis of *Clouds* (see above), Aristophanes complains that he had been unjustly defeated by rivals to whom he refers as *phortikoi* (l. 525). In the parabasis of *Peace* 748, he uses the abstract forms *phorton* ("vulgar stuff") and *bōmolocheumata*

("buffooneries") to describe the kinds of things he avoids in his own comedy (again, in contrast to his rivals). See further Rosen (2006, 230–236), Hunter (2009, 79–80). Clearly, some of the critical vocabulary for analyzing comedy was already available for Aristotle from Aristophanes himself. See, in general, Telò (2013).

20 Aristotle's ambivalent attitudes toward laughter and comic performance in general in *Nicomachean Ethics* are further complicated by comparison with his remarks on comic poetry in the *Poetics*, where his terse and schematic references to comedy make it very difficult to determine when he is being merely descriptive or evaluative. It has been standard to infer from the *Poetics*, in light also of the passage from *NE*, that Aristotle would have disapproved of the invective laughter so characteristic of Old Comedy. See, for example, Halliwell (1987, 87 n.2). But see Heath (1989) for a vigorous attempt to remove moral criteria from Aristotle's discussion of comedy in *Poetics*, and his own conclusion (p. 345): "There is no valid reason to suppose that Aristotle disapproved of (for example) Aristophanic comedy because of its deviations from the mean of wit prescribed in the ethical writings." Destrée (2009) builds even more forefully on Heath's argument, in the end arguing that Aristotle would have actively *endorsed* Aristophanic comedy precisely because its strong invective humor could have didactic, cathartic effects on a (suitably adult; cf. Ar. *Pol.* 1336b20–24) audience, regulating or even purging their own aggressive tendencies (cf. esp. Destrée 2009, 80–86).

21 On laughter, comedy, and poetry, see most famously, *Poetics* 1448b, with Heath (1989). On the physiology of laughter, see *Part. An*. 673a8, with Halliwell (2008, 315–317).

22 E.g. *Politics* 1336b20.

23 I thank Mario Telò for his helpful suggestions on an early draft of this chapter.

CHAPTER 31
Pleasure

Pierre Destrée

When Odysseus is admonished by Circe that in passing by the Sirens with his ship he will be assailed by the most pleasant of charms, produced by their exquisite voices (see esp. *Od*. XII, 44 and 192–193), he cannot but succumb to this forceful appeal, despite the ominous warnings made by the goddess that the experience may kill him: the prospect of being able to listen to these creatures, who produce the sublimest sort of pleasurable music human ears can chance to hear overcomes his mortal fear. Listening to the Sirens' most enthralling music, or (if the episode may be taken as a sort of poetical description of experiencing Homer's own poetry) listening to poetry, and perhaps enjoying art more generally, must be an extraordinary – not-to-be-missed experience – in human life.

But what is the pleasure we get from art? It seems to be intuitively the case that pleasure in art must be of a different sort from the pleasure we get from a purely physical sense of well-being (such as the one we get when drinking a fresh Coke when the heat is scorching, or taking a hot bath in the middle of the winter). But how shall we describe such a pleasure in art? Is it supposed to be an emotional one, or a cognitive one, or, perhaps, some mix of the two? And does aesthetic pleasure imply that we must face what we call a work of art, or rather that we must be in front of an object, whatever it may be, that we consider from an aesthetic attitude? And, whatever the issue on this, if pleasure is at the core of an aesthetic experience (as the ancients obviously thought to be the case), is it that this pleasure, whatever it may amount to, must also be supposed to be taken as what gives art its value? These questions, which are among the most important and still widely disputed in contemporary aesthetics, were already posed, at least indirectly, by ancient philosophers. In this chapter I will try to make explicit (or reconstruct) the answers to these questions that Gorgias, Plato, and Aristotle have to offer.

Aesthetic Attitude

Greek writers used a lot of different words in describing pleasure, such as the verbs *euphrainein*, *chairein*, *psychagōgein*, or *terpein* (and their related nouns or adjectives), together with the more general *hēdesthai* (or the noun *hēdonē*, and the adjective *hēdus*). It is certainly the case that these words had slightly different meanings and usages according to the context. But if we stick to their usage in aesthetics contexts, in poetical texts as well as in Aristotle's *Poetics* and passages from Plato, Philodemus, or Plutarch, it is almost impossible to

establish clear-cut criteria for usage. (If, among other examples, *psychagōgein* may best be understood in the *Poetics* as referring to the stirring up of emotions which is supposed to provide the audience pleasure, in Hellenistic poetics, by contrast, it is obviously used as a sheer synonym for pleasure in general.) And yet, it is perhaps because they wanted to avoid having aesthetic pleasure confused with some other, say, bare physical pleasures, that some writers seemed to prefer using other words than the most common word *hēdonē*, which was evidently firstly and most commonly used in purely physical cases, such as the pleasure one gets from food, drink, or sex.

It should have come as no surprise, then, that the sophist Prodicus explicitly offered such a differentiation. As Aristotle reports, "Prodicus used to divide pleasures [*hēdonai*] into joy [*chara*], delight [*terpsis*], and good-cheer [*euphrosunē*]" (*Topics* 112b22-23 = DK A19, tr. D. Graham). Aristotle does not explain why Prodicus made these distinctions, but later authors reported this: "Delight is pleasure in fine things through the ears, joy is the pleasure of the soul, and good-cheer is pleasure through the eyes" (Hermias, *In Platonis Phaedrum scholia* 238.22–239.2; this is confirmed by Alexander of Aphrodisias, *In Top.* 181.2–6, who cites a Stoic reappropriation of the sentence).

As is pretty clear from this explanation, Prodicus wanted to make sure we name pleasures properly. Since *hēdonē* is commonly used for purely physical pleasure, we need to use other terms for the pleasures of the soul, that is, cognitive pleasures,[1] as well as for visual and oral pleasures. And in these latter cases, since the sounds involved (and also the sights, by extension) are "beautiful" or "fine" (*kala*), Prodicus must refer to the pleasure we get from aural and visual works of art. And yet, very interestingly, this is not a view that Aristotle endorses; on the contrary, he quickly dismisses this suggestion, saying that "All these are names of the same thing, pleasure [*hēdonē*]" (*Top.* II 6, 112b 22–24).[2] Or in other words, and for our purposes here, using different names while all these refer to pleasure and are not easily distinguishable in common usage won't do if one wants to differentiate aesthetical pleasures from purely physical ones.

In the passages where he refers to Prodicus, Aristotle does not say how he would do this, but an extraordinary passage from his *Eudemian Ethics* provides a clear idea as to how one might describe what we would call an aesthetic attitude. Let us read this in its entirety:

> Temperance is not related to pleasure from the sight of beautiful things, unaccompanied by sexual appetite, nor to pain from the sight of ugly things, not to pleasure from listening to harmonious sounds or the pain of cacophony, or from smelling good and bad odours. No one is called undisciplined for having or failing to have those experiences. At any rate, no one would be thought undisciplined for contemplating a beautiful statue

> or beautiful horse or human, or listening to someone singing, with no desire to eat or drink or have sex, but simply in wanting to contemplate those beautiful things and listen to people singing – anymore than those who were spellbound by the Sirens.
>
> Temperance, rather, is concerned with the only two kinds of perceptible object that the other animals too happen to be sensitive to and take pleasure in, namely those of taste and touch. Towards the pleasures of other perceptible objects all beasts appear disposed pretty much equally insensitively, for example, regarding harmonious sound or visual beauty. It is evident that they experience nothing of any note through the simple act of looking at beautiful things or hearing harmonious sounds, except perhaps in a few prodigious cases. Nor are they sensitive with regard to good or bad odours, though certainly animal senses are keener than ours. But even with odours the ones they enjoy are those that please them not for their intrinsic qualities but for their incidental associations. By non-intrinsic I mean odours that we enjoy in anticipation or remembrance of things like food and drink, while the pleasure we experience when we enjoy food and drink is a different one, namely that of eating and drinking. By intrinsic I mean odours such as those of flowers. That is what's behind Stratonicus's neat remark that some things smell beautiful and others smell delicious.
>
> (*EE* III 2, 1230b25–31a12, mod. tr. Inwood and Woolf)

This extraordinary text allows us to provide a first, general answer to our first two questions. First of all, Aristotle clearly links pleasure here to the senses, or at least he mentions the senses of vision, hearing, and smell. And this link he takes as obvious, so obvious that this is exactly the reason why he wants to defend the idea that in these cases there is no profligacy or intemperance, which would consist in taking pleasure over its due in the domain of touch. Here pleasure is linked to the way in which we are sensitive or experience some sort of pathos (and one may note that in many texts of Plato, pleasure is called a *pathēma*). Now, it is also clear that the object that elicits such a pleasure through one of these senses is not supposed to be necessarily an art work. Aristotle mentions the example of a beautiful statue, but he also takes it as obvious that we may get pleasure from looking at a beautiful horse or human being (note that these two examples are those given by Hippias in Plato's *Hippias Major*; see 287e and 288b). So an aesthetic experience does not suppose a specific object, but a specific attitude. Whether a statue (of a human being or a god) or a real human being, these can elicit aesthetic pleasure if and only if there is no sexual desire involved on the admirer's part. Of course, mentioning the beauty of a human body is no random case, but the central case since a beautiful body is likely first of all to elicit a sexual attraction. (In addition to the *parthenos* of Hippias, there are countless passages in Greek literature and inscriptions on vases where the typical

example of a *kalos* human being is a handsome young man, a *kalos pais*.) And, of course, persons who are strongly sensitive to this sort of attractiveness are those who are typically intemperate or indulgent. Thus, in urging his readers not to confuse such a typically indulgent pleasure with the aesthetic pleasure, Aristotle makes two crucial points regarding what is our concern here: an aesthetic pleasure consists in the appreciation of the quality of an object taken for itself, which implies that the faculty linked to the perception of that object is solely at stake. In other terms, Aristotle holds that an aesthetic pleasure supposes an aesthetic attitude where the quality of an object (it being "kalos") is linked to, and only to, its corresponding, perceptive faculty (hearing in the case of sound, and so on).

Even if he typically exposes it in his own, philosophical terms, such a vision does not appear to be idiosyncratic to Aristotle. As he himself seems to invite his readers to remind themselves of that famous passage in the *Odyssey* I already referred to, people who are taking pleasure, even greatly, from such contemplations or oral exposures are "no more intemperate than those who were spellbound by the Sirens." The meaning of the episode as well as of all its details is still a matter of much controversy among modern scholars. But in the reading Aristotle presents (and most probably supposes his readers share), the Sirens obviously epitomize the perfect singing that addresses itself to Odysseus' aesthetic attitude or (note that Aristotle speaks in the plural here) that of any other of their auditors. Even if Aristotle says no more about the episode (which he mentions nowhere else in his extant texts), it is very tempting to reconstruct what he might have said along these lines.

Modern scholars have struggled to make sense of the rather mysterious warning made by Circe, who seems both to be tempting Odysseus with the prospect of enjoying immense pleasure in passing by the Sirens, and trying to prevent him from being killed in one way or another by these creatures. But neither Plato (who mentions the Sirens in four passages: *Rep*. 617b–c, *Phdr* 259a–b; *Crat*. 403d; *Symp*. 216a) nor Aristotle refer to this (allegedly) negative aspect; nor do Cicero or Plutarch either when they mention the episode (see respectively *How to Study Poetry*, 92d; *Fin.* 5, 18). And if the episode may be read as a reference to Homer's own poetry, a rather innocuous reading of this "warning" offers itself: while she is indeed tempting Odysseus into this highly pleasurable experience, which will make Odysseus not want to miss it, Circe's words may just have the effect of poetically underlining that something very unusual is going to happen (and indeed, when Odysseus arrives there, there is no wind, and everything seems to be as if suspended); his experience will be so pleasurable that he won't be willing to return to the usual, real world, and will even run the risk of dying there as if sheer life and its basic needs were of no further importance. Read from Aristotle's perspective, Circe's warning may be understood as a metaphor for the way singing, or epic poetry that is sung with a musical accompaniment, or perhaps

even art taken more generally, can make you forget the importance of normal life and even be willing to do things not conducive to it, to the point of braving death, in order to prolong it. (Another similar example of this would be the myth of the Cicadas in Plato's *Phaedrus*: after the Muses' birth, Plato says there, people were so "struck" by the pleasure of listening to music that they no longer cared to eat or drink, and "died without noticing" it, and were transformed into cicadas who sing until their death without food or drink; *Phdr* 259b–c). And indeed, not only does Odysseus fail to see anything dreadful on arrival there, but he does evidently experience an unusual pleasure, while the crew row on as they usually do, totally deaf to the Sirens' beautiful singing, which is out of the aesthetic experience that is reserved for Odysseus alone.

To be sure, in Homer's text the Sirens are heavily eroticized, and the fact that Odysseus must be tied to the mast of his boat in order to "safely" enjoy their singing mirrors the power of their attractiveness. But this should not be taken literally (at least if we follow Aristotle's putative reading). If the Sirens are the metaphor for the poet, or the artist more generally, their attractiveness is simply the metaphor for the intense pleasure poetry, and art, can afford to their audience. And the fact that Odysseus must be tied, and that he even urges his comrades to free him from his fastenings to the mast, is nothing but the way to express how strong, and probably emotionally demanding, such an aesthetic experience must be.

Plato on Pure and Impure Pleasures

From this background let us now turn to what Plato had to say on aesthetic pleasure. In dealing with Plato, one always runs the risk of being too superficial, or one-sided: as more and more interpreters are insisting, Plato's ambiguous position vis-à-vis art resists any definitive and trenchant conclusions (on this, see Destrée and Herrmann 2011). Perhaps one of the most interesting passages revealing such ambiguity is to be found in the famous image of the "city of pigs" in the *Republic*. There, Socrates suggests to Adeimantus what the ideal of a "first," or original, city-state would look like, wherein all the people's basic appetites, in fact only the necessary ones, would be completely satisfied, thus preventing them in any way being tempted to be unjust. But if the calm and quiet Adeimantus does not object to this, his much more vehement brother Glaucon immediately rejects it as a poor, and indeed absurd, suggestion: "If you were founding a city of pigs, Socrates, isn't that just what you would provide to fatten them?" (372d). And as Plato goes on to show, the main reason why Glaucon rejects such an ideal is because it would completely leave out all those appetitive desires, the unnecessary ones, that also come along with our embodiment. Indeed, as Socrates reluctantly admits, people won't be satisfied in this city unless one provides them with "relishes, incense, perfumes, prostitutes, pastries – and the multifariousness of

each of them" (373a) which are the typical and "multifarious" objects that feed these appetites. And the reason why Socrates can't but agree with this is, as a sheer matter of fact, the impossibility of passing over these desires, which go with our embodiment. These desires are unnecessary for our survival and, in some ways, go against our happiness as Plato envisages it, but they necessarily belong to our human condition. But not only that. In describing this "feverish city," Socrates adds, with a good deal of detail, that what in fact its inhabitants seem to demand is pleasurable and multifarious art work: "painting and embroidery … gold and ivory and all sorts of such things … and all those imitators. Many of the latter work with shapes and colours; many with music: poets and their assistants, rhapsodists, actors, choral dancers, theatrical producers, and also craftmen with multifarious devices" (373a–b). Now this description certainly sounds rather discouraging, and we can hardly miss the puritanical tone of its implicit condemnation. But at the same time, we can't but take at face value the very fact that Plato also has his own brother Glaucon very disdainfully calling such a city, which would lack such unnecessary pleasures, a city of pigs (pigs being for the Greeks the animal typically representing a lack of culture and refined intelligence).

Many scholars have been tempted to make Plato fully endorse his advocating what he calls "a more austere and less pleasant poet and storyteller" for Kallipolis, whose poetry consists in "hymns to the gods and eulogies of good people" (607a) which exactly corresponds to the healthy, yet "austere," "olives and cheese" dinners (372d) that are supposed to satisfy the inhabitants of the "true" and "healthy" city (372e). But, in line with Glaucon's dismissive reaction, Plato in fact does not seem to want to tell us any more about such an unattractive poetry; instead, he insistently calls for a defense of pleasurable poetry (and art more generally, we may suppose), provided it won't harm its audience, and give them instead some "benefit" too.

Both in *Republic* 9 and in *Philebus*, Plato proposes to differentiate pure from impure pleasures, and "proper" from "improper" pleasures. Without entering here into the detail of these highly difficult texts, suffice it to say this for my present purposes. "Impure" means first of all mixed with pain, and where pain plays a major role, for example when pleasure is conceived as the cessation of pain. And since impure pleasures are basically those of the body, and the body is not what is proper to us as rational beings, these are also "improper" to us. This is why Plato clearly condemns poetry, especially tragedy, in the *Philebus*. If it is true, as Plato easily gets Protarchus to agree, that tragic pleasure basically consists in the fact that "people weep and at the same time have pleasure [*hama chairontes klaōsin*]" (48a), tragedy (along with comedy) typically exemplifies mixed or impure pleasures. And since such tragic pleasure is therefore intimately linked to our body, it is an easy step to take, which Plato dramatically takes in *Rep.* X, to supposing that the desire to attend such spectacle in order to get such a pleasure is nothing but an

appetitive desire (people are "hungry" – *pepeneikos* – for such spectacles), like the desire for food, drink, and sex. Calling poetry the "pleasant Muse" (*hēdusmenē Mousa* – 607a) then, is nothing but the pinnacle of such a negative description, "pleasant" referring to the quasi-erotic pleasures poetry provides, the Muse being like a prostitute who allures her client; or as Plato says in much the same way, would-be philosophers who are inevitably attracted by her alluring (since they have been educated in the "feverish" city of Athens, they are now imbued by such desires) and should try and leave her very much like someone who realizes that his mistress is now doing him harm must willy- nilly abandon her (607e).

Plato's dismissal of tragedy (and comedy) seems to be total. But given what Prodicus wanted to do with his language differentiation, which Aristotle would later reshape in his own way, Plato's condemnation may also be read, I would like to suggest, as a denunciation that such an "appetitive" way of enjoying tragedy (and comedy) has nothing to do with (what we call) aesthetics. To be sure, Plato condemns Homer for moral reasons (basically because Homer and tragedy represent a negative world view where happiness is out of reach), and also for the way we usually conceive of this poetry being enjoyed, that is, in a strong emotional, "empathetic" way. But, since Plato himself concludes his critique of poetry by strongly advocating "her defenders – the ones who are not poets themselves but lovers of poetry – to argue without meter on her behalf, showing that she not only gives pleasure but also benefit both to constitutions and to human life" (607d–e), he must think that another way of enjoying it is possible. And, as we have seen, when Glaucon vehemently refuses to make people feast with olives and cheese without any wine or music, this was not only the reaction of an Athenian citizen who couldn't renounce the symposia he regularly attends; it is also a way of making us readers realize that wine and music, and art more generally, must be part and parcel of human culture, that is, of a human life worth living and happiness. Another way of enjoying music and art must, then, be advocated if Plato is to respond to his brother's, and his fellow citizens' (his direct readers'), concern.

One way is related to Plato's own myths and images. Especially if one considers the *Republic*, once we get to the myth of Er which, as Plato explicitly presents it, is a sort of rewriting of Homer's *Nekuia* (the journey Odysseus makes into Hades), it is difficult not to take it as the comeback of a Homeric poetry that would not only please but also benefit the audience. The benefit of telling stories (*muthologein* is the verb Plato frequently uses) is obviously a cognitive and ethical one. To stick to its main scene, where the "ephemerous souls" (since these souls are by definition immortal, this is an oxymoron to make us readers understand that they are a metaphor for all humanity) are to choose their new life, the myth has as a potential benefit for us readers: we now understand the importance of our choices, and are

motivated toward the choice of a philosophical life "so that" – these are the last words of the *Republic* – "we will be happy" (*Rep*. X 621d). And in the same way, Plato often characterizes his images (which are most frequently adapted from Homeric poetry) as thought-experiments (see esp. II 359b–c): these images are to make us (perhaps more easily than bare arguments) "see" or understand particular features that are at stake in the context of the discussion. But, contrary to how it has been often interpreted, it would be wrong, I believe, to take these images as pure and sheer cognitive aids to a philosophical argument; as Plato insists, these images and myths are to be conceived of as "spectacles" one attends, or as works of art one contemplates with great pleasure (e.g. the image of the "variegated monster" at IX 588b–e is to be "formed" by Socrates' interlocutor, and by us readers too, the verb *plattein* being normally used for sculpturing).

To be sure, the reader is supposed to get some cognitive pleasure from his contemplation of these described scenes or images. But when he tells these myths and brings forward these images, Plato usually if briefly mentions that we readers or contemplators are also led to have some emotional reaction, too. This is particularly evident in the central scene of the myth of Er where we readers cannot but feel pity for those who make a bad, most unfortunate choice, and it is to be noted that the first paradigm of such an unfortunate hero to do this is Thyestes, one of the most popular figures in tragedy (the only *Thyestes* that has come down to us is Seneca's, but we know that Sophocles and Euripides wrote one too). But here, pity is not to be conceived of as it should be in tragedies, where you are supposed to identify yourself, or at least to "suffer along" (*sumpathein*, *Rep.* X 605d), with the hero falling into misfortune; the pity the reader of the myth of Er is supposed to be affected by is a sort of detached pity, where we somehow ironically pity the man who by his own fault falls into misfortune. Tragedies are, perhaps, not so much condemned for their effects on their audience as for the way that audience wants to get involved in them; what Plato wants, in order to make tragedy (or poetry and art more generally) both pleasurable and beneficial for its audience, is to attend such spectacles in a more aesthetic way, a way "detached" from your immediate needs (such as crying, etc.), where pleasure (undoubtedly an emotional pleasure) goes hand in hand with a cognitive (and ethical) benefit.[3]

Now, besides these rewritings of Homer and tragedy, there is, I contend, another venue where Plato seems to have defended a rather different view on art. It is rather striking that when, in the *Philebus*, he finally turns to "pure" and "proper" pleasures, the examples he first gives are taken from the aesthetic realm, such as "the colours that we call beautiful, shapes and most odours and sounds." And he explains:

> By the beauty of a shape, I do not mean what the many might presuppose, namely that of living beings or certain sorts of pictures. What I mean,

> according to my argument, is rather something straight or round and what is constructed out of these with a compass, rule and square, such as plane figures and solid, if you understand. Those things I take it are not beautiful in a relative sense, as others are, but are by their very nature forever beautiful by themselves. They provide certain proper pleasures that are not at all comparable to those of scratching! And also colours are beautiful and give pleasure in an analogous way.
>
> (51c–d)

And further examples follow, according to the senses of hearing and smelling, which are given in order that Protarchus understand more clearly: "What I am saying is that those among the smooth and bright sounds that produce one pure note are not beautiful in relation to anything else but in and by themselves and that they are accompanied by their natural pleasures." And finally, an example that anticipates the flower example in Aristotle: "Then there is also the less divine tribe of pleasures connected with smells. But because there is no inevitable pain mixed with them, in whatever way or wherever we may come by them, for this reason I regard them as the counterpart to those others" (51e).

This passage has often been interpreted as if Plato were alluding to the Ideas or the Forms (Hackforth 1945, 98–99); or else, since Plato seems to reject "living beings" and "pictures," he has been accused of being a formalist, rejecting any sort of sensual pleasure from sensible beauty (Porter 2010, 85–95). But this cannot be totally right. For how can we make sense of the Idea or Form of a sound, or of an odor? And as to the alleged rejection of beautiful living beings and pictures, in fact Plato is – more subtly – talking about "living beings and certain sorts of pictures," that is, one may suppose, pictures as they are usually conceived. As is the case in the *Hippias Major*, beautiful living beings are usually conceived of either as sexually attractive younger people or as a horse that is his possessor's pride; and "certain sorts of pictures" might well refer to pictures that excite such emotions as well. So what Plato is rejecting here is precisely the usual way of conceiving of beauty or of beautiful pictures that are expected to arouse such emotions. And, as his referring to scratching (which repeats the earlier example of rubbing oneself in trying to get relief from itching – see *Phil.* 46a) very vividly shows, the desire that is evoked through these bodies and pictures is a desire that is in itself both painful and pleasurable: they evoke the fact that the pleasures we get from such beauties are typically mixed pleasures, not at all pure ones. The insistence on objects like unmixed colors or uniform sounds, and also on enjoyable smells, at least when they are not "mixed with pain," that is, when they do not elicit any sort of bodily desire, points to the idea of a pure and proper – that is, truly aesthetic – way of enjoying these objects.

To be sure, Plato is fascinated by what appears to be a rather mathematical example, but this is easily explainable. First of all, mathematics is what gives

you the most obvious way of having *summetria* which defines beauty; and also mathematics is certainly by far the example most remote from sexual attraction. But this should not mean, I contend, that Plato would have meant that the pleasure would be a purely cognitive one, far removed from any sensual perception. For there is no mention of cognition here; it is just the case that the purest pleasure seems to be provided by such mathematical figures or, better said, by figures that are mathematically constructed (perhaps, Plato is alluding to architecture here?), and moreover, there are also the examples of color, sound, and odor which are typically sensual pleasures.

Aristotle on Emotional and Intellectual Pleasures of Art

Let us now turn back to Aristotle, and see how, I would like to suggest, he somehow achieved Plato's ideal of pure pleasure in relation to art. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle repeatedly says that the aim of poetry is pleasure, and more specifically, that "the poet must procure the pleasure coming from pity and fear through mimesis" (14, 1453b11–12). According to most interpreters nowadays (see esp. Halliwell 2001 ; Donini 2012), one should understand this at first sight rather mysterious expression "through mimesis" from what Aristotle says in his chapter 4, where he seems to present the pleasure of mimesis as a form of learning or understanding. And if so, one should understand, very roughly, that the pleasure "proper" to tragedy consists in the cognitive pleasure linked to a better understanding of the human, tragic condition. But as some interpreters (see esp. Lear 1992 and Ferrari 1999) have rightly argued, there is no further trace of such a cognitive framework in the rest of our *Poetics*; and chapter 4 would be better read as providing the reason why people are attracted to works of art (because in the case of a representative painting or sculpture, they recognize who this character is), not what these works might consist in. That quotation from chapter 14 might thus be more naturally read like this: it is "because" (*dia* has often a causal meaning) it is a *mimesis* of terrible deeds that tragedy can evoke pleasure from pity and fear; if we did not have the clear awareness, in the back of our minds, that this is all mimesis, we would not experience pleasure from these emotions, but pain. (And one may add that in the famous example given at 4, 1448b9–19, it is precisely this awareness that is at stake: what is fascinating in mimetic works of art is that you not only recognize a character as being such and such a person, or a god, but you also at the same time are aware – which the verb *syllogizesthai*, "draw an inference," may convey – that this painting or sculpture is a representation of him or her.)

Now if a strong cognitivist reading is to be excluded, the nature of the "emotional" pleasure we spectators (or readers) get from a tragic play remains to be explained. Since the *Poetics* is obviously silent about this, there is no other way but to turn to Aristotle's philosophical views on pleasure, which he

develops in his *Ethics*. Both in books VII and X, offering two different, perhaps conflicting, views on pleasure, Aristotle is deeply dissatisfied with Plato's treatments of pleasure, and is obviously motivated to find a way out in order to accommodate both cognitive and aesthetical pleasures (esp. in book X, Aristotle is visibly keen to reiterate the examples of contemplating a statue or listening to music). For there is a paradox in Plato's conception of pleasure: how shall we understand that pure pleasures, that is, pleasures unmixed with pain, can be conceived, as any pleasure should be according to Plato, "defined" as the fulfillment of a lack? For isn't any awareness of a lack somehow painful? Even in the case of cognitive pleasure, shouldn't it be evident that the pleasure one gets at finding the solution to a mathematical problem is the fulfillment of the lack of its understanding which must have been felt as somehow painful and which one therefore wanted to put an end to? Whatever the answer to this main difficulty one finds in Plato's texts,[4] Aristotle essentially developed his own theory of pleasure in order to escape this paradox. And indeed by defining pleasure (at least according to *NE* VII) as an "unimpeded activity," (1153a14–15) he thinks he has solved this problem: in the case of our natural faculties of vision or hearing, the pleasure we get from exercising them just consists in their exercise, or actuality, provided nothing impedes them, that is, no external (e.g. fog or noise) or internal (these faculties' infirmity) obstacle prevent their functioning well. And to this, Aristotle adds another requirement: such a pleasure is perfect when, and only when, its object is "beautiful" (*kalos*). A beautiful human body, or a beautiful statue of Aphrodite or Apollo, or a beautiful harmonious piece of music (and, one may add, when it is beautifully performed) are bound to provide their spectators or listeners a perfect pleasure – as if there were a perfect harmony between these objects and our faculties. Aristotle is totally in line with his conception of an aesthetic attitude toward objects (whether natural or fabricated): if I enjoy an Aphrodite statue because it evokes some sexual desire, the pleasure I will get from gazing at it won't be the pleasure of gazing at it properly speaking.

It seems to me that this definition of pleasure fits perfectly with what Aristotle says in his *Poetics*. The emotional pleasure one is supposed to get "from pity and fear through mimesis" is explained by this background given in the *Ethics*: thanks to my awareness of the play being a *mimesis*, I can enjoy experiencing these two tragic emotions, provided, Aristotle adds, that their object, that is, tragedy, or the tragic *muthos*, be the "most beautiful tragedy." In such most beautifully composed tragedies, as in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* or Euripides' *Iphigenia*, one experiences these two emotions per se as it were, exactly as, in the case of vision, one experiences the emotion of admiration toward a perfect, beautiful statue such as the Venus de Milo.

Now, this is only half the story. Bearing in mind that Aristotle takes cognition as such to be an important value in human life (he certainly considers

philosophy to be the pinnacle of happiness, or even what makes human life worth living), it would be rather strange if this would be his last word on it, at least if one assumes that he valued such aesthetic pleasures very highly (as he seems to, most obviously in *NE* 10. 5). I suggest that the way Aristotle presents the pleasure virtuous people get from acting virtuously can provide us with a way to address this problem. For what provides pleasure in the case of acting virtuously is not the acting itself (how could a courageous soldier enjoy his acting courageously in the thick of battle?), but, as Aristotle says, in the fact that his acting is a "beautiful," that is, admirable and praiseworthy, thing; in a word, what the soldier enjoys in the thick of battle is his awareness (whether actually consciously or in the back in his mind) that his acting is valuable per se. It is, in other words, a second-order pleasure. (And perhaps this is how we should understand the famous, yet rather obscure, second definition Aristotle gives of pleasure in *NE* X 4: "pleasure completes an activity […] as a sort of supervenient end" – 1174b31–33.)

In the case of tragedy, and there is no reason why it shouldn't be the case in other art works too, this would accord perfectly well: reflecting on what a "most beautiful" tragedy should best be constructed of must allow readers of the *Poetics* to improve their understanding of tragedy, and thus make them better "judges," that is "appreciators" of tragedies, and therefore help them obtain a better, second-order pleasure while attending, or reading, a play. The case might be similar regarding the music for leisure (*mousikē pros diagōgēn*) Aristotle describes in Politics 8 (see esp. 1339a11–26): younger citizens must be trained to play an instrument in order to be able to become good "judges" of music when adults (there Aristotle repeats the word *kritēs*, which undoubtedly refers to what we would call an aesthetically minded appreciator); they will certainly enjoy it emotionally, one may suppose thanks to its harmony and fine tunes, but also intellectually in the sense that they will be able to understand, and enjoy, how well this music is constructed. Philosophical contemplation is certainly what provides understanding at its best (since its objects are eternal), but it is reserved for some happy few citizens who are capable of it. By contrast, this "music for leisure," as Aristotle implies throughout his description of his best possible city, is available to every citizen (provided they are trained to it from their youth); this music, and probably art more generally, should be part and parcel of perfect happiness, Aristotle recommends, and provide its recipients with the highest pleasures that go along with them.

Gorgias on Imagining Possible Worlds

To be sure, Gorgias' *Helen* (DK B11), and its famous, vivid depiction of the power of poetry for evoking "fearful shuddering, tearful pity, and grievous longing" (9)[5] paved the way to Plato and Aristotle's descriptions of tragedy. But this extraordinary text may also be read, I would like to suggest, as a

formidable overture with ramifications that were to resonate much later, beyond the voices of Plato and Aristotle, once reflections on art were opened to a wider field of imagination.

To be sure, *The Encomium of Helen* is a piece of what was called "epideictic" oratory, that is, a showpiece supposed to display the orator's own abilities (Classical texts for this are Aristotle's *Rhet.* I 3 and Isocrates' *Paneg*. 4) But to what purpose? As the standard story has it, it must be the case that in writing this defense of such an indefensible case, Gorgias had in mind showing his oratorical abilities, and even prowess, thereby attracting students to oratory. But as widespread as this explanation is, it is rather unlikely to reflect the exact meaning and status of this text, at least if one refers to its content.[6] Instead of praising the aim of oratory, persuasion, Gorgias himself condemns and mocks orators whose "compelling contests in words, / in which a single speech, / written with art, but not spoken with truth, / may charm and persuade a large multitude" (13). But that is not to say that Gorgias would present himself as aiming at speaking the truth either, as if he were a better, "truer" orator. To be sure, at the beginning of his text, Gorgias vehemently says that he will "show the truth," and so "put an end to the ignorance" of those who consider Helen to be at fault and responsible for abandoning her husband for Paris. But as the reader will quickly realize, the four reasons that will be given are just "likely reasons" which are opposed to one another – one being correct would make the other three wrong. If this is a speech intended to advertise the role and importance of oratory with the aim of persuasion, it would be a curiously self-defeating one! And indeed, as the reader will finally understand in arriving at its end, it is all a *paignion*, a game, or an amusement, that Gorgias has written for himself.

Now, how should we understand this? A totally opposed story would be to read the *Encomium of Helen* as a game intended merely to please and entertain the reader. And indeed, one could certainly read this from *On What-Is-Not* where Gorgias obviously mocks Parmenides by turning the doctrine of being upside down, just as he mocks the cosmologists here "who, substituting opinion for opinion, taking away one but creating another, / make what is incredible and unclear / seem true to the eyes of opinion" (13). And one should also note that Gorgias was apparently famous in antiquity for his mockeries and jokes.[7] But even if we must surely take this *paignion* as something pleasant and humorous, such a well-constructed and polished work can hardly be just a joke. In the *Symposium* (197e), Plato has Gorgias' former student, Agathon, concluding that his speech was both serious and playful. Since there is no reason not to think that Plato is alluding to Gorgias' own words there (why should we think that this is an invention by Agathon whose speech is entirely molded in Gorgias' style?), there is no reason why we shouldn't apply such an idea to our passage too: this piece is a pleasant *paignion*, but there must also be some serious purpose in it.

But what sort of seriousness? Let us return to the status of the *Helen*. For Gorgias says that we must read this not only as a *paignion* but also as an *encomium*. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle presents praise, *encomium*, as well as blame, *psogos*, as the two parts of epideictic oratory (I.3, 1358b12–13). But a *psogos*, as well as an *encomium*, may also be a poem. And it is to be noted that in talking about tragic poetry, Gorgias abruptly states, "I both deem and define all poetry / as speech possessing metre" (8) – a way of saying that there is in fact no real difference between speech and poetry, except for the versification. But what Aristotle further says in his *Rhetoric* about epideictic oratory is also quite interesting: while both deliberative and judiciary speeches are addressed to "judges" (*kritai*), that is, people who, either in an assembly or at a trial, must correctly judge a case, epidictic speeches are addressed to "spectators" (*theōroi*); those spectators Aristotle calls "judges" too, but here in the special meaning of "appreciators" of how the speaker handles his theme (see *Rhet.* I.3, 1358b2–7; II.18, 1391b15–17). Judiciary and deliberative oratory have a very practical aim, that is, to persuade (even if Aristotle doesn't use the word here) one that such and such a feature is the case (whether dealing with, respectively, the past or future) so that "judges" may make their decision in full knowledge. But that is obviously not so in epideictic oratory: here, there is no practical aim; it is intended for spectators, and especially for an appreciative audience who must "judge" of the speaker's abilities through, we must suppose, an accurate appreciation of the speech's qualities. If we use Aristotle's description of epideictic oratory to make sense of the double characterization of Gorgias' speech as both an *encomium* and a *paignion* (a word that may also mean "puppet"), it seems that Gorgias wanted to make sure that the audience appreciating his own skills should read his *Helen* as a work of art aimed at pleasing them – pleasing in the way a work of art should please an appreciative audience. (An indirect proof for this is how Plato presents sophistic oratory. In the *Sophist*, in the famous passage where he describes sophistic as a knowledge market (224a–b), it is just after comparing it to painting and puppet theater (*thaumatopoiikē*) that Socrates recalls that one of its names is the "art of epidictic" (*epideiktikē*), and he adds that such a name is "ridiculous," understanding it in a literal way as "the art of displaying merchandise." Plato makes it clear that the sophistic art of oratory is like art works: both are for sale and aimed at pleasure.)

Now what sort of pleasure might we suppose Gorgias had in mind? And what sort of value might we suppose he thought his piece must provide his audience with? One famous, yet obscure, saying of Gorgias that Plutarch has reported may provide us with a clue to these questions: tragedy is a spectacle, Plutarch writes, that provides "deception, as Gorgias says, in which the deceiver is more honest than the non-deceiver, and the deceived is wiser than the non-deceived" (B 20). I suggest taking this as a sort of general motto about art through which we could consequently read the *Helen* as his own work of art.[8] Gorgias does not say that his *Helen* must deceive us readers, but

that seems to be evident as the four different, opposed possible ways of exculpating Helen, as we have already seen, cannot but be the four deceptive, or, might we say, purely imaginative, ways of defending Helen. For, we should note that nowhere in his work does Gorgias seem intent on defending such a cause as if he were a sort of first feminist defender. This is all an imaginative game wherein we take pleasure in being enthralled into an imaginative journey; the reader has lost all faith in the "real world" and the "real" Helen and her deeds, and is imaginatively caught up in possible worlds. In so doing, Gorgias did not invent this from scratch. For in antiquity, Helen was already a very much discussed figure, and people pondered her real responsibility in the Trojan War. What is new, though, is how Gorgias took this figure over, and made not only a work of art of it, but also (as Homer did in his Sirens episode) offered a reflection on literature, and art more generally.

Thus, we may suppose that in composing his piece Gorgias himself was an honest deceiver "because, as Plutarch explains, he accomplished what he promised." Now, as to the second part of this motto ("the deceived is wiser [*sophoteros*] than the non-deceived"), one might well wonder what the term *sophos* means here exactly. When Plutarch explains that "the deceived is wiser because one who is not unfeeling is easily charmed by the pleasure of words," we may not be convinced that this is what Gorgias had in mind, or not only (*pace* Verdenius, 118; and Porter 2010, 296). For why should we take pleasure to be solely the purely sensitive charm one obtains from the sounds of words? To be sure, sounding beautiful was one of Gorgias' priorities, he who has been greatly admired for his particular style, full of alliteration, assonance and so forth. But one could hardly reduce Gorgias' vision of poetry, and *logos* more generally, to its purely material sounds, especially if we recall what Agathon says in Plato's *Symposium*. And too, Plutarch obviously understands the term *sophos* as referring to the refined appreciation of art (like the more usual *kritikos*); but if we apparently find it used this way in Aristophanes (*Nub.* 526, 535, 575), Gorgias uses it in its common sense elsewhere (see his *Palades*, 26, where it is opposed to "making a big mistake" – *examartanein*). And indeed, in our context, where it is opposed to "deceived," *sophos* can hardly signify something very different from intelligent or canny (like Odysseus who is *sophos* because he can deceive people). Thus, we readers of this piece are supposed to gain something of *sophia*. But what exactly is it?

Since Gorgias seems to have shared the average common values of his time, it would be tempting to conclude, with Ruby Blondell (2013, 180), that as Helen is presented as incapable of resisting the power of speech, and thus proved to be incapable of reasoning, such an intellectual amusement was ultimately due to lead his hearers, that is his Greek male fellows, to be reinforced in their prejudices as to women's lack of rationality and reflection. But if nothing indicates that Gorgias was a feminist *avant la lettre*, nothing indicates that he

should have shared these prejudices either. In fact, there is at least one case where he very much mocks such a so-called natural "fact": as Aristotle reports in his *Politics* (III.2, 1275b26-30 = Fg 17 Graham), "Gorgias of Leontini, partly perhaps out of puzzlement, partly tongue-in-cheek, observed that, just as mortars were made by mortar-makers, so also were Larissans made by public workers; for there are officers called Larissa-makers." The joke comes from a double pun on the fabrication of vases which was famous in Larissa, and the fact that the Larissans at some point liberally awarded citizenship after major losses of its citizens during the war: by making this joke (there they fabricate both vases and Larissans!), Gorgias apparently mocked the idea of a natural origin of citizenship (Noël 1994, 84–85). Gorgias, thus, was certainly not uncritical of the values accepted as "natural," and nothing prevents us from thinking (even if there is no positive proof for that either) that along the same lines he may have mocked the alleged "natural" irrationality of women. And, contrary to what such a reading must presuppose, his choice of Helen could hardly have been motivated by his prejudices against her in particular, or women more generally. If Helen was perhaps an obvious choice for his epideictic speech, isn't it because she was the best possible incarnation of attractiveness and enjoyment, she who, in Gorgias' strong words, "had godlike beauty, / which she received and didn't keep for herself. / In many did she work much desire for her love / and with her one body she brought together many bodies of men" (4)? For there is an obvious resemblance between Helen's beautiful body and her powers, and Gorgias' speech. If the latter's body is "smallest and most invisible," it is, as a speech, "a powerful lord" that "achieves the most divine works," such as "creating joy" (8). And it is also, evidently, supposed to be beautiful too (as the many assonances and puns here testify). On the other hand, Helen is also often taken as the perfect deceiver, as many passages of Homer testify, which Gorgias' four likely excuses for her deeds are also, in a way.

If what I have argued for so far is right, a more charitable conclusion might thus sound rather like this. Such an imaginative journey into possible worlds might not give you a *sophia* in the sense of a body of knowledge, but it has, perhaps, made you see that, and how, other worlds might be possible, both "deceiving" and pleasing you as spectator of the performance (of course, his *Helen* must be received as a speech read aloud). Like Plato's myths and images, Gorgias' *Helen* is an enjoyable thought-experiment; contrary to what Plato proposed, though, it is not aimed at provoking you to reflect on your own thoughts and thus on your ethical behavior: it just aims at opening up and expanding your world of fantasy, whether you use it for some further aim or not.

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FURTHER READING

While there is plenty of literature dedicated to pleasure in moral contexts, there is as far as I know no book dedicated to aesthetic pleasure in antiquity as a whole, and, paradoxically enough, very few articles or chapters on this specific subject. N. Peponi’s fascinating (2012) book explicitly deals with this theme, mostly in Homer and Plato. On the Sirens, see also Gresseth (1970), and Pucci (1979). On Gorgias, see esp. de Romilly (1973), Noël (1994),

Porter (1993), Halliwell (2011), and Blondell (2013). On Plato, see, among a vast literature, the recent collections edited by Destrée and Herrmann (2011), and Denham (2012). On Aristotle, I would recommend Belfiore (1985), Feagin (1983), Lear (1992 [1988]), Ferrari (1999), Halliwell (2001), Heath (2001), Munteanu (2012), Donini (2012). I have defended in a more detailed way some of the ideas I have presented here in Destrée (2012a), (2012b), and (2013).

NOTES

1 In Plato's *Protagoras*, the character Prodicus says this: "We listeners would especially be delighted rather than pleased. For delight comes from being edified and taking part in understanding through pure intelligence, while pleasure can come to one who merely eats something or experiences some other bodily pleasure" (*Prot*. 337 c = DK A 13).

2 This is also Plato's position (*Philebus* 19c), even if he does not refer explicitly to Prodicus there.

3 A similar story may be described in the case of laughter. Here again, Plato condemns laughter insofar as it expresses the need or urge to release some tension (for Plato, it would be the tension we experience because of the "envy" we feel toward other people) in a free way (or in the case of comedy, behind the wall of mimesis, as it were); and indeed someone who too frequently enjoys bursting out in laughter risks making a fool of himself, as Plato says (*Rep*. X 606c). But if Plato condemns this way of laughing, or rather this usage of laughter, he certainly also avails himself of another use of laughter in his dialogues. I am referring most of all to the irony that is supposed to make us readers realize that such and such a character who represents such and such a world view is flawed, and should be despised and scorned.

4 It is remarkable that this central reproach made by Aristotle against Plato is at the core of many studies by scholars who try, in one way or another, to exculpate Plato of being inconsistent; see, for example, Warren (2010).

5 For the *Helen*, I quote (sometimes with slight modifications) the translation from the Penguin Collection, *The Greek Sophists*, by J. Dillon and T. Gergel. This translation made the excellent choice (for reasons that will become clear) of visually rendering the text as if it were written in verse.

6 One representative, among many others, of this standard reading is Segal (1962). See Porter (1993) for a critique of this view (with different arguments than mine, though).

7 On Gorgias' humor, see esp. Aristotle's reports: *Pol.* 1275b26–30; *Rhet*. III

3, 1406b15–19, and 7, 1408b19–20.

8 It is true that Plutarch reports this in the context of tragedy. But nothing indicates that Gorgias had this specifically in mind; in Plutarch's sentence, Gorgias' quotation bears only on deception, whatever its context may have been.

CHAPTER 32
Art and Morality

Elizabeth Asmis

In the sixth century BC, the poet-philosopher Xenophanes made the following accusation (DK 21 B 11): "Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods everything that is shameful and a reproach among mortals – to steal, commit adultery, and deceive one another." The accusation sets the scene for a quarrel that was to reverberate through the centuries. Traditionally, as stated in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1008–1010), poets were charged with the task of making humans better. Plato took up Xenophanes' complaint. He not only eliminated lust, laughter, and everything unseemly from the gods and their representation, but demanded that poetry should be morally useful in whatever it represents. At the opposite extreme is the view that it is not the function of poetry to be morally useful at all.

Plato put the quarrel in the form of a disjunction. The question is: should poetry be merely pleasing, or should it be "not only pleasing [*hēdeia*] but also useful [*ōphelimē*] with respect to political communities and human life" (*Rep.* 607d)? In short, should poetry be morally useful as well as pleasing? This question dominated discussion about morality in poetry throughout antiquity. It is not, however, suited to accommodating the great variety of answers that were proposed. In the course of my discussion, I shall make two main adjustments. First, I shall draw a distinction between moral instruction and moral content. Taking Plato's demand for moral utility as a demand for moral instruction, I shall insert an intermediate position between his two alternatives. This is a demand for a certain moral content, as opposed to moral instruction. On this view, moral content is demanded as a source of pleasure, not as a means of moral instruction. Aristotle, I shall argue, adopted this view. Second, as I proceed to the Hellenistic period, I shall distinguish between the content of a poem and the mental disposition of the poet or hearer. The Stoics, as I shall argue, reconceptualized the problem of morality by demanding a moral point of view on the part of both creator and recipient. The Epicureans moved from excluding moral instruction to admitting it as an option (as proposed by Philodemus) or viewing it (in the case of Lucretius) as an integral part of the pleasure of composing or listening to poetry.

These adjustments are themselves in need of adjustment. They are intended as a preliminary chart for tracing developments that were continually changing. Plato kept rethinking the problem; later thinkers opened up new approaches. It is difficult to pin down continuities and differences, especially for the Hellenistic period, where there is so little evidence. My aim is to highlight certain approaches, while indicating the need for further analysis.

So far, my remarks have focused on poetry. The reason is that, from the very beginning, poetry was at the center of controversy concerning the morality of what we now call "art" or "the fine arts." Poetry was closely linked with music and dance; and this entire complex, called "music," was viewed as the primary medium of education in early and Classical Greece. Performed orally, both individually from childhood and as a public event, poetry had a strong impact as a shared experience. Even when reading became an option (as it did increasingly from the fifth century BC on), oral performance remained common and poetry remained a basic medium of education. The visual arts had secondary importance as a way of presenting moral values. Gathered under the rubric of "mimetic" (or "representational") arts from the time of Plato, music (in the large sense) and the visual arts made up most of what we now call the "fine arts." The art of prose, which is prominent in modern aesthetics, is something of an outsider, striving to come in. Prose and other arts will appear in the course of this chapter; but poetry (or "music") will continue to keep a central position.

This chapter will treat four main areas of philosophical investigation: Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans. As guiding terms, I will use the triad of author (artist), work, and recipient. In moving from Plato to Lucretius, we will find shifts in thinking about all three terms of the relationship. From having an instrumental role, the author comes to be seen as a creator, having autonomy over his work. Likewise, the recipient comes to be seen from being passive to having autonomy over his reception. There is no straightforward historical progression; instead, our evidence shows different points of view, some occurring concurrently, some developing over time.

Plato: Reforming Poetry

Plato (424–347 BC) not only demanded that poetry should be both pleasant and morally useful, but also proposed a variety of approaches to satisfying this requirement. I shall focus on *Republic* and *Laws* as two attempts to reform traditional poetry. In addition, I shall draw attention to the attempt to create an altogether new kind of poetry, as exemplified by Plato's own dialogues. What distinguishes the latter kind is the endeavor to create virtue rather than to simply impose it.

Plato shared Gorgias' concern, as formulated in the *Encomium to Helen* (8–14), that speech has the power to alter the moral condition of the hearer. In the *Ion*, he extends the condition of passivity from the hearer to the rhapsode and poet, while making all dependent on the same divine source. Both rhapsode and poet are shown up as having no understanding of their own. Neither has a craft; instead, they are carried away irrationally by the power of divinity. The audience, too, responds irrationally, by way of a force that connects god with poet, rhapsode, and spectator as though by a magnetic chain (*Ion* 533c–536a).

What, then, is the moral impact of poetry? All depends on the divine source; and, as far as the text is concerned, it remains enigmatic.

In the *Republic,* Plato attempts to bring the moral power of poetry under human control. The result is an amazingly ambitious program of reform. He first directs his attention to the education of children (in books 2 and 3), then extends his treatment to adults (in book 10). He is concerned, in the first place, with the falsehoods, as he sees it, that Hesiod, Homer, and other poets have told about the gods and heroes (376c–392c). After purging these falsehoods, he turns to the topic of diction, *lexis* (392c). This is a move from the content ("what") to the manner in which ("how") the stories are told. What he discovers here is a distancing device. Poets tell their stories in (i) direct speech, by speaking in the voice of the character, or (ii) indirect speech, by merely narrating what the characters did or said, or (iii) by a combination of both kinds (392d–394c). The first method consists of narration by means of imitation (*mimēsis)*, the second is narration (*diēgēsis*) simply. (I shall translate *mimēsis* as "imitation" throughout this paper, or simply use the transliterated form.) In the case of *mimesis*, the poet – and by extension the hearer – makes himself "like" the character (393c) by speaking in the voice of the character; this has traditionally been called "impersonation."[1] If continued for a long time, these imitations become settled "into habits and nature in body and voice, and in mind" (395d). This is a strong claim: imitation ends up as nature; one comes to "partake of being" (395c). Narration does not have the same impact; for the poet remains himself, staying outside the character.

Plato concludes that a poet should use *mimesis* only in the case of a good character, or when characters do something good; narration should be used for telling what is bad. Overall, there will be just a little imitation, with a preponderance of narration (396e). Others, such as Gorgias, had previously emphasized the power of stylistic effects, such as assonance, alliteration, and rhythm. To this repertoire, Plato adds a distinction that has a purely moral purpose: direct speech and indirect speech are to separate out what is worthy of imitation from what is not.

From stories and diction, Plato moves to a third component, melody (398c–400d). Consisting of harmony (that is, mode of attunement) and rhythm, it must be adapted to the content, just like diction. Some harmonies "imitate" (399a–c) the utterances of a courageous or temperate person, others are degenerate. Similarly, rhythms are "imitations" of a way of life (400a): some suit an orderly and courageous life, others the opposite. Shapeliness or its opposite (that is, the shape of the person stepping in time with the rhythm) "follows on" good or bad rhythm, which in turn follows on diction by being "similar" to it (400c–d). In general, harmony and rhythm follow on diction, which follows on the story.

This entire construct – story, diction, melody – follows on "the character of the soul," with the aim of following on "good character" (400de). Moving to a

sweeping conclusion, Plato extends this aim to other kinds of craftsmanship, such as painting, weaving, and so on: in all cases, shapeliness, good harmony, and so on, are "akin [*adelpha*] and imitations [*mimēmata*]" of good character, and their opposites are akin to bad character (401a). Through a variety of terms including "imitate" and "imitation," Plato here appears to be groping for language that may be used to designate the right kind of poetry. We shall return to the full scope of this program a little later.

In this program of moral reform, what sort of poetry is left? Plato makes his aim brutally clear when he expels (however ceremoniously) the sort of poet who is "of all kinds" (*pantodapos*) – one who "imitates all things and is mimetic" *mimētikos*, 398a). Called "versatile" in modern scholarship, this is the sort of poet who is given to imitating anything at all. He is a shape-shifter, one might say, both in his own person and in everything else he puts up to view. There is no need to name him: Homer is the target, and all who have followed him. In contrast, Plato admits the kind of poet who impersonates good character and, in general, imitates good character.

In book 10, Plato completes his reform of poetry. Socrates now announces that he has new grounds for previously expelling the "mimetic" kind of poetry – that is, "as much of poetry as is mimetic" (*mimētikē*, 595a). This claim has provoked much debate about the continuity of book 10 with book 3. Clearly, what Plato expelled earlier is not *mimesis* in the narrow sense of impersonation (he merely imposed limits on it), nor is it *mimesis* in the broad sense in which it includes "imitations" of good character. The sort of poet he expelled is the "mimetic" poet – the all-mimetic poet, or shape-shifter, who is given to imitating anyone or anything at all, whether good or bad. Following Belfiore and Menza, I take it that this is the sense in which he now uses the term "mimetic."[2] The sort of poet that Plato will now examine is "mimetic" in this sense; and what he means by *mimesis* (which continues to be conjoined by the term *mimētikē* in the reminder of the discussion) [3] is the kind of shape-shifting that the mimetic poet engages in. If we accept this sense, there is no discontinuity with the earlier position, despite some terminological imprecision.

To remove imprecision, Plato now supplies what was missing from the previous discussion. As Socrates acknowledges, he needs to get clearer on the meaning of "*mimesis* in general" (595c). Comparing the poet to the painter, he now defines *mimesis* as the "making [*dēmiourgia*] of semblances [*eidolon*]."[4] To sum up a very complicated train of argument: just as a painter produces semblances (598b) that imitate craft products at a level of truth that is third from the Forms (596e–598d), so a poet produces semblances, consisting of imitations of human actions, beliefs, and feelings (603c), that are third from the truth about virtue (599d).[5] The making of *eidola* is a skill (*technē*) unlike any others; it is mere wizardry, done without any knowledge or right opinion about the object of imitation. All that the imitator understands is how to create

an appearance (601a–602b).

This is not all that is wrong, however, with poetic imitation. There is not only a deficiency of truth and understanding, but there is also a moral loss.[6] The mimetic poet is "naturally" (605a) drawn to the inferior part of the soul, which is given to unrestrained emotions; for this part is easy to imitate, and its imitation pleases the crowd.[7] Despite his versatility, the imitative poet is naturally selective about what he imitates. By focusing on the emotional part of the soul, he neglects the reasoning part, thus causing the emotions to dominate in the souls of the listener.

Worst of all, the emotions that are stirred up by the imitative poet are so strong that they corrupt even good people, except for a very few; for even the best people give way to lamentation and pity (in the case of tragedy), or buffoonery, sexual desire, and so on (in the case of comedy), on the assumption that the resulting pleasure is a clear gain, since it concerns the lives of others (605c–606d). What they don't realize is that to nourish these emotions in the theater makes it hard to control them in real life, so that they come to rule instead of being ruled.

What is so bad, then, about mimetic poetry is that it not only distorts the truth, but also distorts it in such a way as to cause moral harm even to the best people. This is a much fuller case for banning mimetic poetry than was presented in books 2 and 3. As a lover of Homeric poetry, Socrates issues a call for others to present the opposite case: they are to show that this kind of poetry is not only pleasant but also morally useful (607d–608b). In the meantime, he will allow only "hymns to the gods and praises of good men" (607a).

In the course of explaining his ban of "mimetic poetry" in book 10, Plato raises a new question: how can poetry escape the taint of *mimesis*? In particular, is there a way in which poetry can imitate in such a way as to come close to the truth? It is reasonable to take the brief reference to "hymns" and "praises" as a perfunctory summary of the sort of poetry that was allowed in books 2 and 3. In any case, as Burnyeat (1999, 276–279) has pointed out, there will be plenty of poetry in the ideal city. But how can poetry imitate in the right way? Plato leaves this question hanging at the end of book 10.

Let us turn back, therefore, to the discussion in books 2 and 3 to see if we can find clues to an answer. There, as previously mentioned, Plato tentatively used the term "imitate" ("imitation") with reference to the representation of good character. He also extended the qualities that belong to good poetry to other works of craftsmanship. The result is an aesthetic program of enormous scope. After citing painting, weaving, and so on, as well as "the nature of bodies and other things that grow" (401a), as examples of things that contain imitations of good or bad character, he lays out his full program as follows (401b–d):

> Must we then direct and compel only the poets to implant [*empoiein*)] the likeness [*eikona*] of a good character in their poems (or else not to make poems among us), or instruct also the other craftsmen and prevent them from implanting this [quality of being of] bad character [*kakoēthes*], unrestrained, unfree, and unseemly, in painted likenesses [*eikosi*] or buildings or any other product (or else whoever cannot do so must not be allowed to practice his craft among us), in order that our guardians may not be raised among likenesses [*eikosi*] of vice as though in a bad meadow, culling many things each day little by little from many things and so accumulating unawares a great evil in their souls? But must we search out those craftsmen who have the ability, by way of a good nature [*euphyōs*], to hunt out the nature of what is beautiful and seemly, in order that the young, as though living in a healthy place, may be benefited by everything that comes to their sight or hearing from beautiful works, like a breeze bringing health from wholesome places and leading them unawares from childhood to similarity, friendship, and harmony with the beauty of reason?

The scope of Plato's program is the entire environment in which humans grow up. Every object made by a craft, as well as all naturally growing things shaped by human craftsmanship (including, as I take it, the training of human and animal bodies, as well as the culture of plants) must contain a "likeness" (*eikōn*) of moral goodness. Architects, landscapers, weavers, cobblers, farmers, physical trainers, and so on, must all be "directed and compelled" to make their products morally useful in addition to satisfying utilitarian needs. Everything in the human environment is to be shaped to convey a moral message, as far as human skill can do so. Working through the senses of sight and hearing, this is an aesthetic program that is wholly directed to the goal of moral improvement.

There are three features that are especially relevant to our question. One, which has often been noticed, is that Plato uses the term *eikōn*, "likeness," to refer to the appearance of good character. This is in contrast with the term *eidōlon*, which is used in book 10. The right kind of imitation, it appears, consists of making "likenesses" rather than semblances.[8]

The other two features are less obvious. The second is Socrates' brief reference to the "good nature" of the craftsman. In book 10 (605a), he faults the "nature" of the imitator for being drawn to the inferior part of the soul. In the passage just cited, he associates a good nature with the person making the likeness.

The third point is, I think, the most significant. Socrates now associates the poet (as well as the painter) with all other craftsmen as belonging to the general category of craftsmen. He thereby lifts the poet implicitly to the category of the craftsmen of book 10 – that is, to the intermediate ontological

level of craft products and their makers. Like other craftsmen, he produces something real, second only from the truth of the Forms. Just as other craftsmen make furniture, clothing, housing, and so on, so the poet makes a certain kind of speech ("music"). This product must contain a likeness of good character, just like the products of the other craftsmen; but it is no less real for containing such a likeness.

These features do not amount to a theory; they are merely pieces that might be fitted into a theory (which, indeed, Plato never supplies). What they amount is the possibility of a poet, endowed with a good nature, stepping out of the phantom realm of "semblances" and producing a real-life object that contains an imitation of virtue. To do this, a poet needs "direction and compulsion" from outside. In books 2 and 3, Socrates and his interlocutors provide direction by setting up "patterns" (*typoi*) for producing likenesses of virtue. In book 10 (601d–602a), Plato explains further: direction is provided by the user. Endowed with knowledge, this user turns out to be none other than the philosopher-ruler. By bringing in the user, Plato drives another wedge between the craftsmen of the second level – those producing real products – and the mimetic kind of poet. Having knowledge, the user implants true opinions in craftsmen, as opposed to persons who are "mimetic." Lifted to the status of a craftsman, a poet produces morally useful poems by acquiring true opinions from the knowledgeable user.

In the *Laws*, Plato broadens the reform of poetry to include all aspects of its performance. He now turns choral poetry into the basic medium of education. Dance, which had received only a passing nod in the *Republic*, now comes to the forefront of attention. By adding it to speech and melody, Plato rounds out the subject of music as traditionally conceived and thereby presses the entire body into the task of imitating good character. Along with the voice, bodily movements are regulated to imitate moral goodness; and aesthetic pleasure is furnished by kinesthesia as well as hearing and sight.

Further, the variety of uses of the term "imitate" found in the *Republic* now merges into the broadest sense to signify any kind of imitation – not merely impersonation (in the narrowest sense) or the all-mimetic, "versatile" kind (in a broader sense). Choral performances are said to be "imitations of ways of life" (*mimēmata tropōn*, 655d). They are divided into noble and ignoble: the noble kind is divided into military and peaceful; and the military type is said to imitate the deeds of a courageous soul, whereas the peaceful type imitates the deeds of a temperate soul (814e). By habitually taking pleasure in a certain type of character, a person becomes "similar" (*homoiousthai*, 656b) to it. To develop and strengthen the right habits, citizens participate in choruses from childhood to old age. Pleasure is the criterion of the goodness of a performance; this, however, is not the pleasure of anyone at all, but only of the well educated and virtuous (658d–659c). This is the sort of person who will admit only what is both pleasant and morally useful.

Much more fully than the *kallipolis* of the *Republic*, the entire city is portrayed as a healthful meadow, displaying likenesses of virtue. It is a carefully planned city, with tribes and land divided into patterns – beginning with the division into 12 main portions, arranged in a circle around a sacred center – that reflect the order of the world as a whole.[9] As they go about their daily lives, the citizens of Magnesia observe and participate in numerous festivals, experiencing likenesses of virtue all around them. The poets are viewed as craftsmen, joined with other craftsmen as makers of this environment.

Plato still does not trust poets to produce imitations of virtue on their own. Drawing a distinction between an imitation and its object, he makes three demands: knowledge of the original; knowledge of the correctness of the "likeness" (*eikōn*); and knowledge whether each likeness is "worked out well in wording, melody, and rhythm" (669b), or, in other words, whether or not "the imitation is fine [*kalon*]" (671a).[10] The third point concerns the morality of the imitation: it is not sufficient simply to imitate a way of life accurately; one must also show – through wording, melody and rhythm – what sort of life one should pursue. An imitation is "fine" only if it presents a certain way of life as "fine"; that is, it must be morally useful. There is no need for poets to know the third item; what is indispensable for them is technical knowledge of harmonies and rhythms. Instead, choristers over 50 years old must know all three items (670e). Applying the principle (as enunciated at *Republic* 601c–602a) that only users know how things should be made, Plato has the poet take direction from those of the citizens who are experienced choristers.

In the *Laws*, none of the citizens practices any of the crafts; for, according to another principle taken from the *Republic*, all must do just one thing, that is, be citizens (846d–847a). The crafts are in the hands of foreigners who have been admitted for a term; and poets, it is implied, are among them.[11] Poets are also portrayed as bringing their wares from outside. There is just one quasi-exception. Among older performers, those who have gained honor for doing "fine" deeds are given the freedom to compose songs of praise or blame just as they wish, even if their songs are "not musical" (829c–e). These citizen poets are amateurs, equipped with all the essential knowledge – that is, knowledge of all three requirements as just cited – while lacking professional training on how to put together words, melodies, and rhythms. It is possible that they picked up all the skills of a professional craftsman along the way; but this was not part of their training, and it is not necessary to their practice as poets.

Even in the *Laws*, then, Plato still casts the poets out of the city; they may enter and even reside in the city, but they lack citizen status. They must either submit their finished work to the approval of select citizens or compose at their direction. Subject to the authority of others, they lack autonomy, just as in the *Republic*.

There is, however, another kind of poetry that has taken up residence in the city and pervades it wholly. The choristers who have just been mentioned are only a very small part of this presence. This is the poetry that keeps professional poets in check. Comparing the entire previous conversation – whatever the three interlocutors have spoken "from dawn to this point" – to a "certain poetry" (*poiēsis*, 811c), Plato demands that this discourse is what should be learned by teachers and taught to the young, together with whatever is similar to it. The entire conversation (together with what will follow) is the "model" (*paradeigma,* 811b–d) by which all other discourse – whether poetic or prose, written or spoken – must be judged good or bad.

Surprisingly, what should be learned is not simply a collection of laws, or even laws joined by preambles: it is the entire, meandering discourse of the *Laws*, in which three speakers gradually work out a system of laws.[12] In learning this discourse, which includes many excerpts from traditional poetry, children re-enact the process of making laws. There is nothing inherently implausible about this requirement. It is up to the teachers to adjust the assignments to the children's level of ability; but it is entirely reasonable to have children impersonate lawmakers rather than (let us say) kings dispensing justice or heroes fighting in battle. Rulers and heroes apply norms; the lawmakers make them. In the *Laws*, Plato puts forward lawmaking as an activity that should be imitated by children as foundational to all other kinds of imitation.

The dialogue that constitutes Plato's *Laws* is a radically new kind of poetry. We learn more about it in a confrontation staged by Plato between the lawmakers and the tragic poets. The latter come to the city, asking to be admitted along with their tragedies. This is, in effect, an appeal against their expulsion from the ideal city in the *Republic*. This is how the lawmakers respond (817b):

> We ourselves are poets [*poiētai*] of a tragedy that is as fine and good as can be; for our entire polity has been set up as an imitation of the finest and best life – something we claim is, in reality, the truest tragedy. You are poets, and so are we, of the same things, competing with you as craftsmen [*antitechnoi*] and contestants [*antagōnistai*] for the finest drama, which true law alone can naturally accomplish, as is our hope.

This is a novel kind of dramatic competition: two fundamentally different types of poets (lawmakers and tragedians) vie for a new type of prize (educating the citizens, along with pleasing them). The lawmakers are makers ("poets") of a tragedy that consists of the city's way of life; and this life is said to be an imitation of the best way of life. The lawmakers' poetry, as we learned a little before, is the dialogue that produced a code of laws; and what the lawmakers make, through their poetry, is the tragedy of the city's actual way of life. Opposed to them are the traditional tragedians, making poems that

are performed on stage. The lawmakers issue the verdict (817d): if your songs "evidently say the same things we say, or what is better, we will give you a chorus"; otherwise not. All tragic performances – the actual life of the city ("the truest tragedy"), as well as the action put on stage – must conform to the lawmakers' poetic discourse. This is what it is for their poetry to serve as a "model."

It is commonplace to view Platonic dialogue, or certain elements of it, as a kind of poetry. There are some dialogues – such as the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Phaedrus* – that lend themselves especially to this view. Their structure, interplay of characters, poetic language, and use of myth make us think of them as types of drama. The *Laws* seems one of the least poetic dialogues; so it is strange to have Plato single out this dialogue, from among all his dialogues, as a kind of "poetry." There are antecedents, however. Let us turn, first, to the *Symposium*, then to the *Phaedrus*.

In the *Symposium* (209a–e) we find a very different evaluation of Homeric poetry from the attack launched in the *Republic*. Here, Homer, Hesiod, and all other "good poets" are grouped with inventors (among craftsmen) and lawmakers, such as Solon and Lycurgus, as creators of virtue. Pregnant with wisdom, they join with a suitable partner to create not just their distinctive product – an invention, poem, or laws – but virtue as the final goal. All three types of begetters are inventive, creating virtue in themselves and others through collaboration with a partner.

In the *Phaedrus*, the area of creativity is mapped out differently: the art of speech as a whole is now seen as aiming to create virtue. Intent on setting up an alternative to the manipulative, morally corrupt kind of rhetoric practiced in public, Plato redefines rhetoric as a way of "leading the soul" (*psychagōgia*) both in private and in public (261a, 271c).[13] The right kind of rhetoric is an art of communication by which a speaker with knowledge guides a student toward virtue. The way he does so is by implanting his words, like seeds, in the soul of another (276a–78b). Plato singles out three traditional types of speech: prose speeches, poetry, and lawmaking (278b–c). Homer and Solon occur again as examples. For each kind, the right kind of rhetoric proceeds not through speech that has become fixed in writing, but by speech that can defend itself through continued discussion. In short, speech has become dialectic. A speaker of this kind, Socrates says, deserves to be called a "philosopher" (278d). Plato leaves open whether Homer did indeed produce speech of this kind; in the *Republic*, he shuts this door.

Platonic dialogue in general exemplifies the good kind of rhetoric; and the dialogue of the *Laws*, in particular, fills in a category opened up in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. It is the kind of lawmaking that has become dialectic. Despite the rigidity of the actual laws, the text that constitutes the *Laws* is not the final word. It can continue to defend itself, and that is why it is to be taught to the children: they are to get in the habit of defending the laws

that are proposed. As for the writings of the past, they are not necessarily left out: they might be such as to invite further discussion with the help of others. One thinks of Socrates' repeated efforts to come to the aid of authors of the past, such as Protagoras and Parmenides (or, in what looks like a futile attempt, Simonides in the *Protagoras*). Most conspicuously, Plato brings in excerpts from traditional poetry throughout his writings as ways of pushing the discussion further. Dialogue can rehabilitate traditional poetry by making it an object of discussion.

In sum, Plato's attempt to reform traditional poetry goes hand in hand with the attempt to create an altogether new kind of poetry. He advocates two fundamentally different kinds of poetry: poetry composed by poet-technicians, who follow the prescriptions of others and prescribe virtue to others; and poetry composed by poet-creators, whose aim is to discover virtue for themselves and help others to discover it in collaboration with them. Both kinds of poetry are morally useful, the first under the direction of others, the latter through a process of self-enlightenment. This model can be extended to all the crafts (whether "fine arts" or not): prescription from outside is in contrast with self-prescription. What matters in each case is the real-life imitation of virtue by a person; the imitation ("representation") of virtue by a text or any other craft object is a means to this end.

Aristotle: Defending Poetry

At the beginning of this chapter, I proposed to replace Plato's disjunction with a threefold division: a demand for moral instruction together with pleasure; a demand for a certain moral content as a source of pleasure; and a demand for pleasure simply. This division rests on a distinction between two ways of viewing moral content: prescriptively, as a means of moral instruction; and cognitively, as a source of pleasure. Modern critics have done much to elucidate this distinction. In particular, it has been argued that a work of art may be marred aesthetically by certain moral defects.[14] Aristotle (384–322 BC), I shall argue, offers a version of this view. He does not demand that poetry should be morally instructive. What he does hold is that tragedy fails to achieve its particular goal, the creation of a certain kind of pleasure, if it lacks a certain moral content. This is a defense of tragedy, or any type of art, as a self-sufficient endeavor to be judged by principles of its own.

In judging Aristotle's view of morality, one needs to take account, in the first place, of the role of catharsis. The term occurs just once in the relevant sense in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in his definition of tragedy (1449b24–28):

> Tragedy is an imitation [*mimesis*] of a serious and complete action, having magnitude, with language that is embellished separately by each kind in its parts, of people who act and not by narration, accomplishing through pity and fear the catharsis of such feelings.

The two kinds of embellishment are meter and melody, which are used in different parts (meter throughout, and melody only in the choruses). Following Plato, Aristotle classifies tragedy as a genre that lacks narration, while using "mimesis" in a broad sense to encompass poetry, painting, instrumental music, and dancing.

The many interpretations of catharsis that have been offered over the centuries may be divided into three main kinds: purgation, purification, and clarification. On the purgation view, as championed by Bernays in 1857, a chronic pathological condition of pity or fear is relieved as though by a medical purge. Purification has been understood as either religious or moral.[15] Clarification is viewed as a cognitive process, resulting in a better moral understanding.[16] On this last view, tragedy has an educational function. Some scholars reject all three kinds. Among them is Lear, who takes catharsis as the release of the emotions of pity and fear in a safe environment.[17] I shall suggest that catharsis is a kind of purgation, though not of a chronic pathological condition: it is the clearing away of the pity and fear that are aroused in the course of a tragic performance. Because this excess does not remain, it does no harm. The emotions themselves return to their normal condition. This is a response to Plato.

What makes interpretation so difficult is that, although Aristotle promises in his *Politics* (1341b38–40) a detailed explanation of catharsis in the *Poetics*, there is none in the extant text. So we are left with the sketch he provides in the *Politics* (1341b32–42a18). This sketch deals with rhythms and melodies, not poetry as language that is put in meter or sung. Aristotle proposes three distinct functions for rhythms and melodies: education, catharsis, and entertainment (1341b36–41). What makes rhythms and melodies educational is that they contain an imitation of character, so as to have an effect on the listener's soul (1340a18–b13); Aristotle agrees with Plato on this. As for catharsis, Aristotle explains it by putting the emotions on a scale of more or less: all people feel the same emotions, but some are strongly emotional; some are especially prone, for example, to pity and fear. Comparing those who are strongly emotional (*pathētikoi*) to people who feel religious enthusiasm, Aristotle claims that, just as the latter react to orgiastic melodies "as though receiving medical treatment and catharsis," so strongly emotional people obtain "a certain catharsis and relief with pleasure" from melodies. This is a "delight without harm" (1342a3–16).

How far does this model of catharsis apply to tragedy? The first question is whether catharsis applies not just to pathologically emotional persons (as Bernays proposed), but can also apply to persons who generally have their emotions under control. Plato provides the key to an answer. Even the best people, he maintains, give way to their emotions in the theater, contrary to the restraint they aim for in real life. By getting their "fill" of lamentation and "nourishing" pity into something "strong," and in general "watering" the

emotions instead of "drying" them up, they make it harder for themselves to control these emotions in real life (606a–d). In Plato's view, the performance of a tragedy arouses an excess of emotions, which produces harm by lingering in the soul of the hearer. To use Plato's metaphor, the excess is not drained off; it continues to "water" the soul. Aristotle addresses this very concern. He agrees that the experience of tragedy produces a heightening of the emotions: this is the function of tragedy, and it applies to everyone. But this excess, he holds, is cleared away by a kind of purging so that it does no harm.

This answer raises a second question: how can the excess be cleared away "through" the very emotions – pity and fear – that have grown to excess? It has been objected that, in common with Greek medical views, Aristotle held that medical healing occurs primarily, or even exclusively, by the use of opposites.[18] Even if true, however, this is no objection to viewing tragic catharsis as occurring by the very emotions (pity and fear) that have been strengthened. The underlying principle is that health consists of a balance. When the balance is seriously disturbed, the physician may intervene in such a way as to help the body recover its balance. Purgation is one method of preserving the balance. Corresponding to the distinction between natural processes and medical intervention, purgation proceeds in one of two main ways: spontaneously, or naturally; or by the use of drugs.[19] In the former case, the body returns by itself to a normal condition, without any intervention from outside. A prominent example is menstrual discharge (as has often been noted); but the process applies in general to any type of excess.[20] Drugs remove an excess by being introduced from outside.

Just as in the case of natural or spontaneous catharsis, I suggest, the excess of pity and fear that has been aroused by the experience of a tragedy is purged away from inside, through this very condition, after the experience has come to an end. The emotions of pity and fear return to their normal condition by themselves, without the need of any intervention from outside. Aristotle describes this process by saying that "such feelings" – that is, the sort of pity and fear that has been stimulated by the tragic experience – are purged "through pity and fear" themselves. One might say, using the language of opposites, that an excess is healed by its opposite: this opposite is the depletion of the excess, and it is produced by the operation of the emotions themselves. In the case of pathologically emotional people, catharsis is produced by the application of an external remedy, serving as a kind of drug – the use of orgiastic melodies. In the case of tragedy, where the hearer's normal emotional state is temporarily heightened by the stimulus of a tragedy, the catharsis proceeds internally, through the emotions themselves; the emotions regulate themselves. The tragic experience is the cause, not the remedy; the hearer's own normal emotions are the remedy. What orgiastic catharsis and tragic catharsis have in common is the purging of an excess. The difference is that, in the former case, the purging is induced from outside, as

though by a medical procedure; in the case of tragedy, it is produced from within.

If this is right, tragic catharsis is no more educational than cathartic music. Although the method of purging differs, what happens in each case is merely the elimination of an excess. As is commonly pointed out, Aristotle nowhere demands that tragedy, or poetry in general, should be morally useful. In the case of tragedy, he demands that the poet must produce "the pleasure that comes from pity and fear through imitation," and that this must be "implanted" (*empoiēteon*) in the events that are shown (1453b10–14). In view of Plato's strictures, Aristotle's demand for pleasure alone hardly seems accidental, especially when we consider the verbal echo in the word "implanted." Whereas Plato demanded that a poet should "implant" (*empoiein*, *Rep.* 401b) a likeness of good character, Aristotle demands that what should be "implanted" is a certain kind of pleasure. This pleasure, consisting of pity and fear, is produced by a certain kind of plot, characters, thoughts, and language. This is what the craft of making a tragedy consists in: the production of pleasure, not moral instruction. Catharsis is only a side issue, added as a defensive move against Plato: because any excess of emotion is purged away, the pleasure of experiencing tragedy is without harm.

Part of the skill of producing the right kind of pleasure consists in choosing a certain moral content. Aristotle rejects the representation of bad characters, not because this corrupts the soul, but because, on the one hand, the change of fortune of such characters from good to bad does not elicit pity or fear and, on the other hand, their change from bad to good fortune is "most untragic of all." He rejects the portrayal of good characters, moreover, because their change from good to bad fortune is neither fearful nor pitiful but defiling (*miaron*). Instead, he demands characters who are neither good nor bad, because the change from good to bad fortune as the result of a flaw is pre-eminently tragic (1452b30–53a17). What determines the choice of character is not the need for moral instruction, but the need for a certain kind of pleasure. One cannot have this pleasure if one's moral sentiments are outraged; but there is no demand that our moral sentiments should be improved. The emotions of pity and fear are a type of moral experience; and one might hold that the pity and fear aroused by a tragedy help us to improve our moral condition. But this is incidental to the goal of tragedy. We can learn something from tragedy, just as we can learn something from any other experience that engages our emotions; but tragedy itself does not aim to produce moral improvement. Instead, it aims to produce a pleasure that is rooted in our ordinary experience as human beings.

Tragedy, therefore, demands a certain moral content as a prerequisite for the achievement of its distinctive goal, the production of a certain kind of pleasure. There is a moral engagement of the hearer, and it is possible for the hearer to learn from tragedy; but it is not the aim of tragedy to provide moral

instruction. By abandoning the demand for moral instruction, Aristotle is able to establish the art of poetry, as Ford (2002, 266–271) has emphasized, as an autonomous art, using principles of its own to achieve its goal. The artist does not need to be a moral expert, or any other kind of expert other than in his own skill; having an expertise of his own, he must be judged on the basis of the principles of this expertise.

The Stoics: A Moral Point of View

The Hellenistic period (third and second centuries BC) pushed the problem of morality in the arts in new directions. Unfortunately, the evidence is slim. None of the works written on the subject is preserved in a complete text. We rely almost entirely on reports by authors after the second century BC, including fragmentary papyrus texts by Philodemus, an Epicurean of the first century BC. Still, it is possible to chart certain developments. The Stoics transformed the field of inquiry by shifting attention from the art work to the mental disposition of the artist and the recipient: what they demanded is a moral point of view on the part of both artist and recipient.

At the basis of the Stoic approach is a division of things that exist into (i) good, (ii) bad, and (iii) neither good nor bad (that is, "indifferent"). Something is good if it is virtue or participates in it, such as a person or an action; it is bad if it is vice or what participates in it; otherwise, it is neither.[21] It follows that a work of art, such as a poem, cannot be good or bad; for it is not a virtuous or vicious state of mind, nor does it participate in it. Only the artist or recipient, or his state of mind or activity, can be good or bad. This is contrary to ordinary ways of speaking, and one might want to dismiss it as just another Stoic verbal contortion; but it makes an important point. What is good about a poem, for example, is not the object, but the activity of the poet in creating it or the activity of the recipient in interpreting it. It follows that what is said in a poem may be morally repulsive. This does not matter. So long as the poet was good in saying it, or the recipient can put a good interpretation on it, morality is saved.

What I have just presented is a reconstruction, consisting in the application of general principles of Stoic philosophy to poetry and other arts. We have no Stoic text offering an explicit account of the relationship among artist, work, and recipient. The Stoics did write books on poetry, including a book by Zeno (334–262 BC, founder of Stoicism) called "On poetic listening" (SVF 1.41) and another by Chrysippus (*c*.280–206 BC), "On how to listen to poems" (SVF 2.16), but their content is lost. Philodemus' criticism of a person identified as a Stoic (possibly Aristo, a student of Zeno) in his fifth book of *On Poems* contains a few traces of how the division into good, bad, and indifferent applies to poetry.[22] For the rest, we rely on supporting evidence, consisting of a large variety of texts by both Stoics and non-Stoics. What

these texts show is a broadening of perspective from the art work and its impact to the contribution made by both artist and recipient. The result is a shift from demanding moral content, viewed as the imitation of virtue, to demanding a moral attitude on the part of the artist and the recipient. If the artist is morally good, the content will reflect his moral condition; if he is not good, the recipient can compensate by his own moral attitude.[23]

Some surprising consequences follow. By demanding virtue on the part of the artist (just as for any other craftsman), the Stoics raise the artist (together with any other craftsman) to the level of the creative wisdom of god. God, to be sure, creates infinitely more things in creating the world (and creating it repeatedly). The quality of wisdom, however, is the same; for, according to the Stoics, any virtuous person at all is the equal of god in respect to his virtue. As mini-demiurges, human craftsmen join the company of the supreme demiurge. This is the ultimate vindication of the poet or any other artist. Their craft consists in making imitations (on this, the Stoics followed Plato and Aristotle); but there is nothing inferior about them as makers of imitations. Their creative wisdom, as such, is the same as god's. One might object, as was a constant refrain, that this is an impossible goal; the Stoics insisted that, even if rarely, it can be attained.

Another consequence is just as surprising. By reconceptualizing the roles of both artist and recipient, the Stoics offer, all at once, a solution to a perennial problem: the immorality depicted by Homer and other revered poets of the past. Immoral scenes may be part of a moral purpose; and, even if they are not, they can be put to a moral purpose by the recipient. There is no need to reform or replace traditional poetry: the Stoics proposed to save the whole of it by shifting responsibility to the recipient. Accordingly, they ransacked the poems of the past for information that they could put to their own use; Chrysippus was especially committed to this practice. They also gave new impetus to allegorical interpretation, together with the search for etymological roots. There has been some discussion among scholars of whether the early Stoics imputed to the poets themselves the interpretations that they proposed. As Long (1992) has shown, there is no evidence that this is what they did. This is entirely to be expected, given their views on reception. What matters is not whether the poets had the same insights as proposed by their readers; what matters is the insights that readers acquire for themselves in their own response to a poem. It is the job of readers to bring their own moral purpose to a poem, regardless of the moral purpose of the poet.[24]

In his treatise *On how the young should listen to poems*, Plutarch tells more about how a reader can compensate for moral deficiencies in a poem. He assigns two methods in particular to the Stoics. One is to extend the meaning from one instance to similar instances. For example, Hesiod's saying (*Works and Days* 348) "nor would an ox be destroyed if there were not a bad neighbor" may be extended to other animals, such as a dog or ass (34b–35a).

Chrysippus is credited with this piece of advice. The other method is that of correcting (*epanorthousthai*) a text by rewriting it. Plutarch traces this method to Antisthenes and assigns it to both Zeno and Chrysippus (33c–d). Zeno, for example, corrected Sophocles' verse "whoever comes to do business with a king is slave to him, however free he comes" by rewriting it as "… is not a slave if only free he comes." As a moral correction, this kind of rewriting must be distinguished from textual emendation, which was also called *epanorthsis*. Zeno is not proposing to emend the received text (as has sometimes been thought); instead, he uses the received text as a basis for a new text, authored by himself. The recipient becomes himself a kind of poet by putting his interpretation into the form of verse.

The whole of Plutarch's *On how the young should listen to poems* has been thought to reflect Stoic thought; and this is, I think, generally right. One must be careful, however, about crediting the Stoics with methods that Plutarch does not specifically attribute to them. What is behind Plutarch's text is the new Stoic view of the recipient as an interpreter, bringing his own judgment to a poem or any other work of art. Others quickly took up Stoic receptionism, developing it in their own way into a flourishing new approach to art. Philodemus' *On the Good King According to Homer,* as we shall see, is striking testimony to the success of Stoic receptionism. Similarly, Plutarch reversed Plato's strictures on traditional poems by showing how young people can be guided toward deriving a benefit by making the right kind of judgment for themselves. Both authors are indebted to their own philosophical traditions for the way they put to use Stoic doctrine. They also show how the Stoics could respond to the objection that they do not take sufficient account of the impressionability of the recipient, especially in the case of children. What is needed is the guidance of a mentor, not censorship. The mentor emerges as a key figure in the effort to make Stoic receptionism work.

Two prominent Stoics were also poets; and they made their own particular contribution to the problem of morality in poetry. One is Cleanthes, a close associate of Zeno. As Philodemus reports, he took a special interest in the difference that sound makes to the message of a poem or song:

> [Cleanthes] says that poetic and musical examples are better: philosophical discourse can report divine and human affairs adequately, but plain prose does not have diction that is proper to divine greatness; instead, meters, melodies, and rhythms come as close as possible to the truth of the contemplation of divinity.[25]

This is a remarkable distinction: philosophical prose can explain god, but cannot fully express the greatness of god. For this purpose, language needs to be invested with meter and melody. Behind this demand are Plato's proposals on rhythm and melody in the *Republic*. Cleanthes goes further by proposing an epistemic advantage: rhythm and melody not only fit the greatness of god,

but bring one closer to a recognition of this greatness. Seneca (*Ep.* 108.9–12) tells us more about Cleanthes' position on poems: according to Cleanthes, verses impress a thought more forcefully on the mind and make our perceptions clearer. In sum, Cleanthes vindicates poetry as a path to enlightenment: instead of falling short of the truth, it brings us closer to the truth. It crowns philosophy, as it were, by giving full expression to the truth discovered by philosophy. The underlying reason, one might conjecture, is that poetry corresponds especially closely to the rationality (*logos*) that pervades the world. This rationality is not merely a logical system: it is embodied in the world as having sensory form. What makes it so perfectly beautiful (*kalon*) is that it has both logical and sensory harmony. Poetry mirrors this harmony.

Cleanthes celebrated the greatness of god in poems such as his *Hymn to Zeus*. By contrast, the Roman Stoic, Seneca (*c.*1 BC to AD 64), composed tragedies that show some extremely vile human characters (such as Atreus in *Thyestes*) and vile actions (such as the brutality of the Greeks in *Trojan Women*). Not only that: these characters and actions meet with success in the play. How can such plots be justified? The Stoic demand for a moral point of view provides an answer. It is the task of the poet to show the world as it really is, with all the dissonances that humans bring to a world ruled by god. Seneca shows the dissonances for what they are by implanting many warnings against them in his plays, together with many morally uplifting sayings. If others fail to understand, that is not his responsibility as a poet. It is the job of the poet to represent the moral structure of the world, not map out a program of moral reform. That is the job of the philosopher, using precepts.[26] Through the use of meter, the poet does indeed impress moral thought especially forcefully on the mind of the hearer (just as Cleanthes proposed), but it is up to the hearer to give assent to the thought by making a judgment of his own.

Still, one might object: how can a poet avoid arousing the emotions (*pathē*), defined by the Stoics as following on, or identical with, irrational judgments? Seneca's answer is that the sort of feelings one has at a play, just as when reading a history, are not in fact emotions, but so-called "preliminary feelings," *propatheiai*, which happen even to a wise person.[27] These feelings, consisting of momentary jolts and shocks, are without judgment; and they cover a large variety of reactions, including the revulsion of seeing a vile character (such as Atreus) changing from bad to good fortune. Aristotle excluded certain plots as untragic on the ground that they do not provoke the emotions of pity and fear. There is no such restriction in Stoic tragedy; any type of emotional reaction is permitted, so long as it is not an emotion in the full sense of requiring a judgment. Poets are free to show extremely vile, as well as extremely good characters, and have them either succeed or not.

How, then, does a poem engage the hearer, if not through the emotions? There is no room for what the Stoics called "pleasure," for it is an emotion

(*pathos*).[28] On the other hand, the Stoics (SVF 3.431–432) did admit a number of "good feelings," *eupatheiai*, consisting of joy (*chara*), caution (*eulabeia*), and will (*boulēsis*). These feelings are linked with rational judgments. Joy, in particular, was defined as a "rational uplifting," and it is the rational counterpart of pleasure. In place of pleasure, it is appropriate for a poet to feel joy in his act of creation, just as it is for a hearer to feel joy in his act of interpretation. Despite basic differences, the author of *On the Sublime* appears indebted to the Stoics in the way he portrays the response of the hearer (7.2): "By nature our soul is somehow uplifted by true sublimity and, assuming an exultant height, is filled with joy [*chara*] and pride, as though it itself had created what it has heard." On the Stoic view, the hearer is a kind of creator, along with the author; and the height of experience for both is to be uplifted by joy.

Finally, the Stoic thinker (possibly Aristo) whom Philodemus criticized in *On Poems* divided a poem into two components: thought (*dianoia*) and verbal composition (*synthesis*). Both components originate in the mind of the poet. The first is judged by reason; the second is judged by experienced hearing.[29] The two kinds of judgment may be said to combine into a single aesthetic judgment, made by either poet or hearer. In either case, the judgment must come from a morally good disposition. If the poet or any other kind of artist is morally good, his act of creating the art work is good; and this is a moral benefit to him. Likewise, if the recipient is good, his act of interpreting the art work is good; and this is a moral benefit. The art work itself is morally neutral.

The Epicureans: Seeking Pleasure

Finally, I shall take a brief look at the Epicureans. Surprisingly, Epicurean hedonism turns out to be hospitable, in the eyes of Epicurus' followers, to the use of poetry to provide moral instruction. Philodemus and Lucretius offer two very different views of how pleasure may be combined with moral utility. Both Epicureans put to their own use the Stoic shift from the work to the author and recipient.

Epicurus (341–271 BC) is said to have rejected poetry as a "destructive lure" (U 229), and to have cast out Homer from cities, just like Plato (U 228). At the same time, he permitted the wise person to take pleasure in poetry, on the ground that he or she was protected against its dangers by philosophical knowledge.[30] Epicurus did not attempt to reform poetry. Instead, he held that education should be imparted through prose. He also held that there is no need for any quality of speech other than clarity.[31]

His follower Philodemus (*c*.110–40 BC) showed a new appreciation of poetry. A poet himself, he embraced poetry as a source of pleasure, while insisting (as did all Epicureans) that his views were compatible with those of his master.

The poems he wrote are short epigrams, offering witty observations on various aspects of human life. In agreement with Epicurus, Philodemus used prose to impart philosophical instruction.

Using Plato's disjunction as the basis of his defense of poetry, Philodemus argued that it is not the function of a poem to be morally useful.[32] There are many beautiful poems, he said, that are not morally useful;[33] and even if they contain some moral instruction, it would have been better to convey it in prose.[34] Music (in the sense of melody) has no educational utility whatsoever; for this requires language.[35] He subverted Plato's demand for a combination of pleasure and moral utility by conceding that music "is useful for pleasure."[36] Philodemus might have said the same of poetry: what makes it useful is the pleasure we derive from it. Thought (*dianoia*) is more important than diction (*lexis*).[37] The thought, however, cannot be separated from the diction (or verbal composition, *synthesis*). Poets create the thought "from themselves" through verbal composition, even if they derive the bare thought, free from poetic elaboration, from others.[38] More insistently than anyone else in antiquity, Philodemus insisted that a poem is a union of thought and expression. Pleasure is a response to this union, with priority given to the thought.

While rejecting the demand for moral instruction, Philodemus held that a reader can extract a moral benefit from a poem. Putting Stoic receptionism to an Epicurean use, he shows in his treatise *On the Good King According to Homer* how philosophical guidance can help a reader to make moral discoveries for himself. Homer, he says, provides "starting points," or hints, for "correction" (*epanorthōsis*, col. 43.16–18).[39] Just like the Stoics, he is using the term "correction" to refer to a correct interpretation on the part of the reader. The consequence for the Epicurean is that she can augment the pleasure of experiencing a poem with the pleasure that comes from philosophical learning.

The Roman Epicurean and poet Lucretius (*c*. 99–55 BC) went so far as to turn Epicurus' prose teachings into poetry. Conceived as a kind of epic, his poem *On the Nature of Things* teaches Epicurean physics as a means of teaching the right way to live. Lucretius justifies his use of poetic form by comparing himself to a doctor who coats the cup of bitter medicine with sweet honey (1.936–50). He uses pleasure instrumentally in this way as a means of overcoming pain; and this might be considered good Epicurean strategy. But how is the use of poetic form compatible with Epicurus' demand for clarity? On this point, Lucretius offers an implicit defense: he prides himself on composing such "luminous" (*lucida*) verses on doctrine that is abstruse (1.933–934). His poetry is not merely a means of overcoming reluctance; it sheds full light on the subject matter. How does it do so? In general, how does it aid understanding?

To answer this question, we need to extend our view of the pleasure that

Lucretius associates with poetry. Pleasure is not merely a means of getting the student to learn; it is the very goal of instruction. The poet himself previously reached this goal – the pleasure of Epicurean enlightenment. If we go back to the Stoics, we recall that the poet expresses thoughts of his own, as rooted in his own mental disposition. Lucretius proclaims himself an absolutely faithful follower of Epicurus, treading in his very footsteps as he culls his golden sayings (3.1–13). What Lucretius presents, however, is not just the teachings of Epicurus: he presents his own conversion to Epicurean philosophy. He is the recipient of Epicurus' prose, expressing his illumination as a convert in the form of poetry. The enthusiasm of the convert merges with that of the poet, and the illumination of the convert is reflected in the verses. This is what makes his poetry so "luminous": it is the fact that he, the poet, has made clear to himself the full force of Epicurus' teachings and now seeks to pass on this illumination as fully as he can through his skill as a poet.

The illumination of the convert is the source of a much deeper pleasure than that of simply listening to poetry: it is the pleasure of being an Epicurean. Lucretius is eager to pass on this pleasure to the hearer; and it is up to the hearer to appropriate it by a response of his own. In Epicureanism as a whole, moral instruction is the goal of physical instruction, and Lucretius interweaves this goal throughout his exposition. Using Epicurean criteria, he offers a new way of meeting Plato's demand for poetry that is both pleasant and morally instructive. At the same time, he offers his own interpretation of Philodemus' dictum "useful for pleasure": his poem is useful for the full pleasure of leading an Epicurean way of life.

Conclusion

This paper began with Plato's demand that poetry should be not only pleasing but also morally useful. I suggested adding an intermediate category: poetry that requires a certain moral content as a source of pleasure, not as means of moral instruction. Plato, I argued, proposed two ways of satisfying his demand: following the instructions of others, or creating moral rules for oneself. Aristotle took a position within the intermediate category. Despite basic differences, the Stoic position has an affinity with Plato's second way: both author and recipient are viewed as engaged in an activity that brings a moral benefit to each. By shifting attention to the mental disposition of the artist and the recipient, the Stoics emphasized the role of the artist as a creator and of the recipient as an interpreter. In the latter respect, they laid the foundation of a receptionist view of art. The Epicurean Philodemus subverted Plato's demand with the proposal that poetry is "useful for pleasure." Lucretius recast Plato's demand by writing a poem that expresses the pleasure of following the teachings of Epicurus.

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FURTHER READING

Several recent collections of papers on Plato include studies of his views on morality in poetry: *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Ferrari 2007); *Plato and the Poets* (Destrée and Herrmann 2011); and *Plato on Art and Beauty* (Denham 2012). Halliwell (1986) offers an excellent introduction to Aristotle's *Poetics*. The collection of essays in Obbink (1995) is a good starting point for getting to know Philodemus. Information on Stoic aesthetics is scattered in diverse articles; see the references above.

NOTES

1 Lear (2011) argues that *mimesis* is appearance-making rather than impersonation.

2 Belfiore (1984, 126–127), following Menza (1972); cf. Asmis (1992, 350) and Moss (2007). By contrast, Halliwell (2002, 56) (cf. 1988, 4–5 and 105–106) proposes that Plato now "(re)expands the concept of mimesis to cover all representation in both poetry and the visual arts"; Burnyeat (1999, 296–300) shares this view.

3 See 598b and 603a–c; cf. the use of *mimētikos* at 595b, 602a–b, and 605a–b.

4 599a; cf. the definition of "imitator" as "*dēmiourgos* of a semblance" at 599d and as "*poiētēs* of a semblance" at 601b.

5 See Moss (2007) on the analogy between painter and poet. It is understood, I take it, that the mimetic poet is third from an understanding of the Forms of virtue.

6 It is on account of this loss that Nehamas (1982, 47, 67–69) proposes that Plato does not expel painting, but only poetry, from the ideal state.

7 I take it that the inferior part of the soul is the appetite together with the spirit (*thymos*) insofar as it sides with the appetite; see further Singpurwalla (2011). On the importance of educating the spirit, see Destrée (2011).

8 The nomenclature reappears in the *Sophist* (235d–236c), where the "mimetic" art, identified as the "making of semblances" (*eidōlopoiētikē* 236c, cf. 266d), is divided into two kinds: *eikastikē* ("likeness-making," or the making of an *eikōn*), which imitates without any distortion of the original; and *phantastikē* ("appearance-making," the making of *phantasmata*), which distorts the original. The process of division continues at 266d, with the emergence of *mimesis (mimētikon*), understood as impersonation, as a subdivision of *phantastikē* (267a). Plato now allows that impersonation may be done with knowledge or without, with a subdivision of the latter into simple-minded and deceptive, followed by a further subdivision of the latter so as to arrive at a final definition of the sophist (267b–68d).

9 771b and 778c; on the city layout, see Golding (1975), Saunders (1976), and Spaltro (2011, 185–203).

10 I retain the MS reading; see Morrow (1960, 314–315). At 668b, the Athenian demands that music must have a "similarity to the imitation of the fine [*kalou*]." I take it (with a view to the definition of the "truest

tragedy" at 817b) that choral poetry must be similar to the real-life imitation of the best type of life. This is a descendant of the tripartite division of the *Republic*. The three levels are now presented as poetic imitation, real-life imitation, and best life (*to kalon*).

11 The only explicit example of the exclusion of poets from the citizen body is that of foreign poets coming to the city to present their tragedies (817a).

12 Commentators have been reluctant to take Plato at his word on this point. Morrow (1960, 340), for example, writes that children are to learn the content rather than the letter of the *Laws;* so Meyer (2011, 398). I agree with Laks (2000, 266) that teachers read excerpts to be memorized by the children.

13 For the entire *Phaedrus* as a process of philosophical *psychagogia*, see Asmis (1986).

14 Gaut (1996, 182), for example, holds that "a work is aesthetically meritorious (or defective) *insofar as* it manifests ethically admirable (or reprehensible) attitudes," although "manifesting ethically commendable attitudes is not a necessary condition for a work to be aesthetically good"; cf. Gaut (2007, 57–66).

15 Lessing (1767–1768, vol. 2, 207–208), cited by Bernays (1979, 155), understands catharsis as a purification that consists in the transformation of the extremes of pity and fear into virtues.

16 Golden (1962, 1969) initiated this interpretive turn in recent times. Building on Golden, Nussbaum (1986) has argued that, by attending to our responses of pity and fear, we can learn something about the human good (see esp. 388–391. See also Halliwell (1986, 197–201) and Belfiore (1992, 340–360) and (2003).

17 Lear (1992, esp. 334). Similarly, Ford (1995, 113) holds that tragic catharsis is a response "that attends the arousal of our emotions of pity and fear in an environment made safe by the fact that the tragic spectacle is only an imitation of suffering." Destrée (2003) views catharsis as a purgation of the emotional turmoil aroused in us by a tragic performance.

18 So Halliwell (1986, 193), Belfiore (1992, 260–290, esp. 289), and Lear (1992, 317).

19 See, for example, the Hippocratic treatise *Ancient Medicine* 19.30 (purging of yellow bile, either spontaneously or by a drug); *Nature of Child* 18 (lochial discharge, occurring spontaneously or by drugs); *Epidemics* 1,100, case 4 (on the natural catharsis of lochia); *Internal Affections* 42 (spontaneous catharsis through diarrhea, resulting in a cure from typhus, caused by overeating).

20 Another example is the discharge of phlegm in the case of an unborn child or by young children (*Sacred Disease* 8).

21 SVF 3.75–76 and 117; see further LS, v. 1, pp. 357–359 and 374–377.

22 *On Poems* 5, cols. 16.28–24.22 (Mangoni). The early Stoic Aristo has been suggested as Philodemus' target; see Asmis (1990, 149–150) and Porter (1994, 66–68).

23 See further Nussbaum (1993, 136–145) on the Stoic demand for a critical attitude on the part of the observer.

24 Later Stoics, such as Cornutus, did impute allegorical knowledge to Homer and others. The difference is that, unlike the early Stoics, they were intent on showing that Homer, above all, was a wise person.

25 Philodemus, *On Music* 4, col. 28.2–14 Neubecker (=142.2–14 Delattre); see further Asmis (1990, 194–196).

26 At *De ira* 2.2.2, Seneca states that "anger is dispelled by precepts" (*ira praeceptis fugatur*).

27 *De ira* 2.1–6; see Graver (2007, 85–101) and Staley (2010, 74–75, 95).

28 SVF 3.394; contra Staley (2010, 90–92).

29 See note 22 above. See Asmis (1990, 153–158), on the two components.

30 U 5 and 20; see Asmis (1995, 19–21).

31 Diogenes Laertius 10.13 and 120.

32 *On Poems* 5, col. 32.17–19 (Mangoni); cf. *On Music* 4, col. 26.4–7 Neubecker (=140.4–7 Delattre).

33 *On Poems* 5, cols. 4.10–18 and 32.9–17 (Mangoni).

34 *On Music* 4, col. 20.11–16 Neubecker (=134.11–16 Delattre)

35 *On Music* 4, cols. 15.1–5 and 26.7–9 Neubecker (=129.1–5 and 140.7–9 Delattre).

36 *On Music* 4, col. 18.5–7 Neubecker (=132.5–7 Delattre).

37 *On Poems* 5, col. 35.7–9, cf. 36.29–32 (Mangoni); and *On Music* 4, col. 18.16–19 Neubecker (=132.16–19 Delattre).

38 PHerc 1676, tr. C, col. 17(6).24–27 Sbordone.

39 See further Asmis (1991, 19–27), and the forthcoming new edition of *Good King* by Jeffrey Fish.

CHAPTER 33
Art and Value

Michael Silk

How and how far were the arts valued in the ancient world? A meaningful answer to this question calls for a comparative frame of reference: how and how far *were* the arts valued, as opposed to how they *might be* valued? So, in effect, how were they valued in antiquity, in comparison with valuations in other periods of Western civilization? Such a frame of reference is required because valuations become more meaningful in a wider perspective, and because the many complications inherent in the question are best revealed in this perspective. This chapter, accordingly, will range widely over antiquity and later ages.

Categories and Complications

How and how far have the arts been valued? In confronting the question, we are faced with a number of complications. Some of these are obvious enough in principle: the fact that different arts may be differently valued within any one age; that, because the arts may take very different specific shapes, from one age to another, within a given age contemporary versions may be much more highly valued than earlier versions, or vice versa; that, within any one age, the institutional status of an art form may differ from the estimation given to it by a particular theorist; and that, more simply, individuals may differ in their estimations. In practice, such complications may be connected and hard to disentangle.

Take music. In the Classical Greek city-state, music enjoys a well-attested institutional status in communal polis life, as it does in the more private context of the aristocratic symposium, but essentially as concomitant of lyric poetry – in which context, music seems, in Plato's phrase, to "follow the words" (*Republic*, 3. 398d). To this extent, the status of music might be variously assessed. More straightforwardly: in his *Politics* (8. 5–7), Aristotle credits music with a certain educational value, but also with psycho-therapeutic properties. It can safely be assumed that Aristotle's view overlaps with, but is not identifiable with, the valuation implicit in its institutional status.

Compare the very different world, and the very different music, of nineteenth-century Europe, where music is institutionalized primarily in the concert hall and the opera house. Within this world, a few German thinkers see in music something altogether more profound. The philosopher Schopenhauer, for instance, proposes that music uniquely penetrates the depths of metaphysical

reality and thus has supreme value as a means of access to that deeper world. This valuation, and the grounds for it, are not without influence, but both are – again – remote from the assessments of music implicit in its institutional status in Schopenhauer's own day: as remote, no doubt, as the orchestral and emotional intricacies of nineteenth-century music are from the music of Classical Greece. In our own day, meanwhile, when the music of the avant-garde is quite different again, this contemporary music is ignored by many "music lovers," who revere the music of Schopenhauer's century instead.

It is not only new art that can repel its immediate public. New *kinds* of art also do. It is characteristic that new art forms are "not taken seriously" at first (cf. generally Craig 1975). Within contemporary music, jazz is established as a distinct, reputable range of forms, whereas when it first impinged on the critical world, it was vilified and hardly recognized as "music" at all. "Why is the jass [*sic*] music …?" was the indignant question posed in 1918 by the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, which went on to stigmatize "jass" as "low" and "indecent," "vice" and "atrocity" (Newton 1961, 50). In late Archaic Athens, some such reaction greeted emergent comedy, as against "serious" tragedy. As Aristotle noted (*Poetics* 5), "the developments of [early] tragedy, and those responsible for them, have not been forgotten, but the first phase of comedy was – because no serious interest was taken in it [at the time]." And Aristotle also indicates that the institutional trajectories of the two forms differed correspondingly. Whereas tragedy was formalized at the City Dionysia toward the end of the sixth century, "the magistrates only licensed comic choruses at a relatively late date" (487/6 BC).

Or consider the situation of the visual arts, where the specifics, once again, show huge divergencies. At the ancient/modern extremes, compare and contrast the Parthenon in Athens with Utzon's Sydney Opera House, or Pompeian wall paintings with today's art installations. And once again, many "art lovers" today strongly prefer "traditional" examples to contemporary avant-garde forms (irrespective of the fact that many "traditional" examples were avant-garde in their own day). Conversely, there is little to suggest that (say) many Greeks of the Classical age valued the discarded sculptures from the Archaic period over their "modern" equivalents. Conversely again, by the end of the first century AD, on the evidence of Quintilian (*Education of the Orator* 12.10.3), some enthusiasts preferred Archaic painting, others (like Quintilian himself) Classical.

Then again, consider the variable status of the visual art forms from the standpoint of the individual artist. In early Greece, painters, sculptors, and architects are treated as worthy craftsmen, and little more; until the fifth century BC, symptomatically, they are usually anonymous; and the situation is much the same throughout most of the Middle Ages. In later antiquity, however, various individual artists (Phidias, for one) are treated as special beings (the "most illustrious" of sculptors – "clarissimus" – says Pliny,

Natural History 36.18). And in late medieval Italy, once again, art is fast becoming associated with its innovative practitioners, whose names are suddenly on everyone's lips: "In painting, Cimabue thought / He held the field; now all they shout / 's 'Giotto:' the other's fame is lost to sight." Thus the poet Dante in his *Comedy* (*Purgatory* 11.94–96) in the second decade of the fourteenth century.

By the end of the fifteenth century, individual Italian painters, sculptors, and architects are widely acclaimed, as are their art forms; and such judgments are often combined with comparative, and sometimes controversial, valuations of these art forms with each other and with the other arts. "Poets rank far below painters in the representation of the visible, and below musicians in the representation of the invisible," said Leonardo da Vinci (notes on comparison of the arts; "Trattato della Pittura" 32), ?1498). In the Preface to his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550/68), Giorgio Vasari identifies the "divine" Michelangelo as the supreme master of the three visual arts – "the three arts," in his words, "most worthy of praise."

There are further complications. One is that, across the arts, significant formulations of value and valuation are subject to the availability of a critical-theoretical idiom and of critics and theorists to articulate it. Take the visual art of Archaic Greece. In this era, temple buildings, for instance, enjoy an established centrality in public life, but worked-out theorizations of their artistic significance hardly exist – and not because they are lost, but because they never existed in the first place. The practice of any kind of art predates its theory. As Quintilian noted, in the literary sphere, "poetry precedes the study of poetry" (*ante … carmen ortum quam observatio carminis*: *Education of the Orator* 9.4.115).

With literature, however, this complication, at least, is less intractable than elsewhere. Here, uniquely, art and criticism share a common medium: articulate language. And centuries before the age of developed theory – the age of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Quintilian's *Education of the Orator* – works of literature promote articulate claims for their own significance. In the proem to his *Theogony*, the poet Hesiod declares that "the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus" once confronted and "breathed a divine voice into me": they "taught Hesiod" the art of "beautiful song" (*Theogony* 22, 25, 31). Like an Old Testament prophet (compare, for instance, Ezekiel, 1–3), Hesiod claims to have had a specific, visionary experience, through which he takes on an authoritative voice, (literally) inspired by a (literally) divine source. And though the human poet is aware that even a divine source can mislead ("we know how to communicate truth – when we wish to," the Muses tell Hesiod: *Theogony* 28), his new status empowers him to speak out even "to kings" (*Works and Days* 202, 248, 263). Such formulations are not (we shall suggest) decisively articulated. Even so, they are hardly possible outside the verbal arts.

Relatedly, “literature” can be seen to subsume works of explicit literary theorizing themselves. Few of us would think of the treatises of Aristotle or Quintilian as “literary.” In contrast, though, the treatise *On the Sublime*, traditionally attributed to Longinus, has impressed many as a work on a par with its (largely) literary subject (the author “is himself the great sublime he draws”: Pope, *Essay on Criticism* (1709), 680); Horace’s *Ars Poetica* and Pope’s “essay” too are major poems by major poets; and since the eighteenth century, furthermore, a wide range of prose criticism and theory has been, in effect, aligned with the literature it theorizes – from Samuel Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets* (1781) to the sophistications of Roland Barthes or François Lyotard, more recently.

Valuations of literature have been an attested feature of literature from Hesiod’s age to our own. The upshot is that questions relating to value are most easily discussed in the literary sphere; and for this reason the discussion of art and value in this chapter will focus on literature in particular, although “the arts” as a whole will still be kept in view.

But now the final complication, which applies to literature as much as to any of the arts. Not only do the specific features of literary works, like all art works, vary greatly over time (the *Theogony* and James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, and also Lyotard’s reflections on Joyce, are all “literature”). The very understanding of “literature,” along with the understanding of “art,” varies over time; and this usage of the words “literature” and “art” (and their equivalents in other languages) is itself a relatively recent phenomenon (on “literature,” cf. Wellek 1970, 1–36; Williams 1983, 183–188). It follows that the identification of (say) the *Theogony* as “literature” has an inbuilt awkwardness which cannot be avoided. The situation is in some respects most clear-cut, and most acute, in the case of the visual arts, because of the cultural determination whereby an art gallery or museum insists on the art status of its exhibits: “A Romanesque crucifix was not originally a *sculpture*, or Cimabue’s Madonna a *painting*. Even Phidias’ Pallas Athena was not, originally, a *statue*. Museums … have imposed on the viewer a wholly new attitude towards the *work of art*” (Malraux 1951, 11–12, italics added). Implicitly, such contextualizing marks off “art” from “life” – “the museum isolates the work from the profane world,” as Malraux put it.

At the same time, this undeniable complication is neither fatal nor, in practice, paramount (if it were, this chapter could not be written). Let us review the facts, with particular reference to literature.

The word “literature,” and the word “art” (and their equivalents in other languages), take on their modern significance over a period of time, with the crucial shift ascribable to the eighteenth century. This is the century of transition. It is the century when – not irrelevantly – public museums and art galleries first become a feature of the cities of the Western world; when the category of “the aesthetic” is formulated by Baumgarten in his *Aesthetica*

(1750); and when "aesthetic" response is identified as distinctive, "disinterested" response by Kant (*Critique of Judgement*, 1790/3). From the time of Aristotle, in the fourth century BC, to the seventeenth century AD, "literature" (whatever collective term is used, or not used) in effect means poetry and drama (itself generally in verse), together with prose that lends itself to analysis in terms of the categories of rhetorical theory ("eloquent" prose, as it was often called in medieval and Renaissance Europe). "Literature," then, is poetry, oratory, and comparable prose. Since the eighteenth century, "literature" (increasingly so called) means, primarily, poetry, drama (usually, now, in prose), and prose fiction (especially the novel) – and then, secondarily, a range of non-fictional prose works, like some "essays" and some public utterances (Martin Luther King's speeches, perhaps – or Cicero's) which are (in circular fashion) felt to have "literary" qualities or affinities.

Significantly, this new understanding of "literature" is itself residually evaluative. We identify the novels of Dickens and Petronius as "literature," but probably hesitate to apply the word to hard-porn fiction. We may think, "this is literature, but bad/inconsequential/offensive literature." More likely, it does not occur to us to think of "literature" here, at all.

Yet this is not the whole story. There are significant continuities (often ignored) between our modern understanding of literature and earlier, implicit, understandings. We bracket poetry, drama, fiction, and the rest, as "literature." This is not all that different from what the Italian writer Boccaccio does, in the fourteenth century, when he associates *poesis* (poetry) and *fabulae* (stories, like Boccaccio's own *Decameron*), and then the poetry of Dante's *Comedy* and Virgil's *Georgics*, with works of "philosophy" and "theology" (*Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* (1360s?), 14.7.9–10 and 12–13). In antiquity, too, we repeatedly find comparable associations in practice. In his *Education of the Orator*, Quintilian makes a critical inventory of notable authors and approved genres, which covers poetry (from Homer to Seneca) and "literary" prose (from Plato to Cicero) (10.1.46–131). And over four centuries earlier, Aristotle makes an explicit theoretical connection between most (though not all) verse-writing, including drama, and prose fiction (Plato's "Socratic dialogues," *Poetics* 1), under the common rubric of *mimēsis*.

All in all, it is more than a retrospective convenience to align (even if we must sometimes differentiate) the literature of the modern world with the "literature(s)" of earlier ages, ancient, medieval, early modern.

Assessing Art and Assessing Epochs

Assessing art and assessing an epoch of art are two different things. Reviewing a celebrated experiment in "practical criticism" designed to reveal the limitations of educated responses to poetry, the critic I.A. Richards

reflected, in 1929, that "this century is in a cultural trough rather than upon a crest" (Richards 1929 , 320). The proposition refers primarily to the damaging effect of "our contemporary social and economic conditions" on the training of sensibility, but 80-plus years later, even so, one marvels at the judgment. Richards, after all, is writing at the end of a decade that produced a wealth of cultural-creative achievements, not least within literature, from definitive novels by D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce to poetry of the order of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Valéry's *Charms*. Many of the works in question, like the *Waste Land*, themselves convey a powerful sense of cultural crisis. One marvels, nonetheless.

The disjunction between contemporary and retrospective estimation is nothing new. In 1589 the Elizabethan man of letters George Puttenham looks back wistfully to the "high esteem" in which poetry was held in ancient Greece and Rome, and even "in all former ages" – whereas "in these days" poets and poetry ("poesy," in his terms) are simply "despised" (*The Art of English Poesy* 1.8) – and this, in an England learning to admire Sidney, Spenser, and Marlowe (and, very soon, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Donne). One marvels again – noting, however, that, around the same time, Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* (published posthumously in 1595) takes a comparably gloomy view of the perceived status of "poor poetry, which from almost the highest estimation of learning is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children." The "name of poetry," Sidney observes, is now "odious" – and yet it is "of all human learning the most ancient."

Two and a half centuries before Puttenham and Sidney, the great Italian scholar-poet Petrarch makes a speech to mark his laurel coronation in Rome, in 1341. Only 20 or so years after the completion of Dante's *Comedy* (which many, over the centuries, have identified as the supreme work of Western literature), Petrarch too laments a sad state of affairs *now*, in contrast to the glorious esteem in which literature was held *then*. With reference to poetry in particular, he suggests that the men of his day are too preoccupied to concentrate on "such studies," unlike their counterparts in ancient Greece and Augustan Rome, when poetry and poets (apparently) were properly esteemed.

In any such comparison between today's fallen world and past glories, more than one set of issues may be at stake. On one level, the issue is sociocultural. *Which* segment of society is it that does, or doesn't, esteem literature properly? For Puttenham, the problem is partly that literature is valued by (no doubt) a cultured elite, but not by the elite that really counts: "in all former ages, good poets and poetry were highly esteemed and much favoured of the greatest princes" (*The Art of English Poesy* 1.8). Petrarch's position is comparable, but complicated by the circumstance that, for him, in the first phase of Renaissance humanism, the highest literature must be written, not in the vernacular (like Dante's *Comedy* and Petrarch's own lyric poetry), but in classicizing Latin (like his own Coronation Oration and the poem – his epic

Africa – for which the laurel crown was awarded). For Richards, in 1929, it is ultimately the dissolution of elite culture as a whole, and the onset of mass culture, that prompts the disquiet.

In all these cases there are ironies to savor. In the case of Puttenham and Sidney, and Petrarch before them, not the least of the ironies is that the age of esteem to which they look back so wistfully is Classical antiquity – when not only did some authorities *not* hold the arts in high regard; some of the authorities most admired by these latter-day pessimists had equivocal or even dismissive attitudes toward literature, and poetry in particular.

The most straightforward cases here are Cicero (equivocal) and Plato (dismissive). Plato's successive critiques of poetry in, especially, the *Republic* are devastating. For Plato, poetry is morally damaging (it appeals to the emotions, not to reason) and has spurious claims to authority (poetry is a mere imitation of an imitation of metaphysical truth) – and all this, with specific reference to the masterpieces of Attic tragedy and Homeric epic (*Republic* 3 and 10).

Cicero is more elusive. At times as censorious as Plato (Chalkomatas 2007, 271–272), Cicero – like Plato himself – is a master of literary prose, and also the author of rhetorical treatises which (like most such treatises, from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* onward) endlessly cite poetic precedent for particular literary effects and modes of writing. And some of Cicero's testimony is especially revealing.

The Ciceronian text worth singling out here is the *Pro Archia* ("On Behalf of Archias," 62 BC) – the text, as it happens, that Petrarch had "rediscovered" a few years before his Coronation Oration, and the very text that he looks back to, in admiration, in that speech. The Archias on whose behalf Cicero is speaking (in a citizenship case) is a poet. It is appropriate, therefore, that Cicero should speak up for poetry and articulate, in Archias' interests, the most impressive version of the claims for poetry that might seem plausible to an educated Roman audience of his day; and he does indeed make claims for poetry. In years gone by, inattentive readers (as well as Petrarch) gushed enthusiastically: Cicero produced "perhaps the finest panegyric of literature that the ancient world offers us" (Watts 1923, 20). And it is true that Cicero acclaims, in unspecific terms, various poets, both Greek (like Homer) and Roman (like Ennius); that he associates himself, unspecifically, with "literary pursuits" (*haec studia*: *Pro Archia*, 6.12); that, hardly more specifically, he commends "literature" (*litterae*) as an aid to the orator (6.12) and as an active interest of such illustrious public figures as Scipio Africanus (10.22) and Alexander the Great (10.24) (but then "*litterae*" subsumes sophisticated prose, as well as poetry); and that he even appeals to the time-honored notion (once used as an argument *against* poets, by Plato in the *Apology* and elsewhere) that the poet is the recipient of "divine inspiration" (*divino quodam spiritu*: 8.18).

Yet what does all this notional commendation amount to? The most significant passage in Cicero's "panegyric" is one in which he, once again, subsumes poetry under the broader, and more evasive, category of *litterae*, and does for once make more specific claims – but, on inspection, in the most grudging terms (7.16). The likes of Scipio, Cicero declares, would never have indulged in "literary pursuits" if they had not, thereby, been helped to appreciate and emulate "moral qualities" (*virtus*). But at once, as if anticipating the furrowed brows of a skeptical audience, Cicero adds: "yet even without any such gain, I think you would agree that this kind of mental exercise is exceptionally civilized and gracious" (*humanissimam ac liberalissimam*). And then: "these pursuits give private pleasure without hampering us in the world at large" (*haec studia … delectant domi, non impediunt foris*). In the final analysis, then, literature and poetry are harmless *entertainment*, and don't actually negate what *really* matters – the serious business of public life. Cicero is content to defer to (as one supposes) the current state of Roman attitudes, within which poetry (and even "literature") would seem to have a very modest place – whatever Petrarch, and others, may have supposed in later ages.

Ancient versus Modern

Both by what it says, and by what it fails to say, Cicero's "panegyric" sums up a decidedly limited estimation of poetry, and even *litterae* in general, in the great scheme of things.

What *might* Cicero have said? Or rather: what *can be*, what *has been*, said on behalf of poetry, and literature more generally, across the ages – and in which ages has it been said? There is no tidy answer to these questions. Early Greek poets make very distinctive claims (Hesiod's among them); but, as we shall see, these hardly focus on the *outcomes* of poetry, which is significant in more than one way. The most specifically focused, and the most operationally significant, claims have been made over the last two and a half centuries: precisely, then, in the modern age in which "literature" itself is a crypto-evaluative category. A short selection of quotations can suffice. Some of these make claims for "poetry" or for "literature," others, more broadly, for "art," but in all cases subsuming literature. Some of the quotations (set out here in chronological order) are cited in their original English; others are translated – from French (h, i, k, l), German (a, d), Russian (e), and Spanish (n):

a. Goethe (on first reading Shakespeare): "I had a powerful feeling that my life was infinitely expanded. Everything seemed new, unfamiliar, and the unaccustomed light hurt my eyes" ("Shakespeare: A Tribute," 1771).

b. Shelley: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" ("A Defence of Poetry," 1821).

c. Matthew Arnold: “poetry is at bottom a criticism of life” (Preface to *The Poems of Wordsworth*, 1879).

d. Nietzsche: “All art … can be understood as a remedy and aid in the service of growing and struggling life” (*Lighthearted Philosophy* [*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*], 1887, section 370).

e. Viktor Shklovsky: “Habitualization consumes works, clothes, furniture, your wife, and the fear of war … And art exists for you to recover the sensation of life; it exists to make you feel things” (“Art as Technique,” 1917).

f. Ezra Pound: “Artists are the antennae of the race” (“Henry James,” 1918).

g. R.G. Collingwood: “Art is not a luxury.” “Art is the community’s medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness” (*The Principles of Art*, 1938, chs. 12, 15).

h. Jean-Paul Sartre: “the writer has chosen to reveal the world, and in particular to reveal man to other men, so that they may assume responsibility” (*What is Literature?*, 1947, ch. 1).

i. Jean Anouilh: “Life is very nice, but it doesn’t have any shape. The object of art is specifically to give it some” (*The Rehearsal* [*La Répétition*], 1950, Act 2).

j. F.R. Leavis: “Literature has its … crucial relevance because [it compels us to ask] what for? – what ultimately for? … In coming to terms with great literature we discover what at bottom we really believe” (*Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow*, 1962).

k. Louis Althusser: “[significant novelists, from Balzac to Solzhenitsyn] give us a view of the ideology which their work alludes to and which it is constantly fed by, a view that presupposes … an internal distantiation from the very ideology their novels emerge out of” (“Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” 1969).

l. André Malraux: “The artist is not a transcriber of the world, but its rival” (*The Metamorphosis of the Gods*, 1976, epigraph to vol. 3).

m. Umberto Eco: “it is through fiction that we … train our ability to structure our past and present experience” (*Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, 1994, ch. 6).

n. Doris Salcedo: “Art sustains the possibility of an encounter between people who come from quite distinct realities” (interview with Charles Merewether, 1999).

Significantly, these various propositions are advanced from very different standpoints. Some belong to specifiable literary or artistic movements: (b) to

Romanticism, (e) to Russian Formalism, (f) to literary modernism; (k) is Marxist, looking to the world of action, as is the politically committed existentialism of (h); (m) has a scientific-anthropological ("semiotic") cast; (n) assumes the outlook loosely known as postmodernism (often, though not here, more concerned to relativize value than to identify it); others are not easily labeled. Some of the claims belong to practicing artists, from Goethe (a) to Salcedo (n) (a practicing sculptor); some to philosophers (Nietzsche, d; Collingwood, g); others to critics and commentators.

Despite their different standpoints, the propositions all agree on valuing literature or poetry (or "art") as a distinctively *transforming* aspect of human experience. Literature has an *actively* ethical, intellectual, existential significance, without which life is impoverished. It enhances our perception, our understanding, our world of possibilities, our aliveness, our interpretation of reality, our responsibility as human beings, our sense of other beings, our capacity to see through or beyond the norms of social convention. One notes, at this point, that a related, but different, case would be made for other arts: "although we find the experience of very different kinds of art intrinsically rewarding … the rewards of literature are not the same as those of [say] music or architecture" (Budd 1995 , 44). At all events, as some of the propositions make explicit (and a host of other quotations would confirm), literature is felt to effect its transformations with a distinctive subtlety or force.

Quite simply: in earlier ages, and in antiquity in particular, there is no precedent for such claims, unless momentarily or superficially. For antiquity, though, things are very different in earlier Greece (say, from Hesiod and Homer to Aristophanes) and in the Greco-Roman world (from Aristotle onward). Let us consider the two periods in reverse order.

Contrast, first, Anouilh's suggestion that art gives life "shape" (i) or Eco's talk of "structuring experience" (m) with a well-known proposition of Aristotle's. Tragic drama and other such poetry, says Aristotle, is "more philosophical and more serious than historiography" (*Poetics* 9). Sophocles, then, operates on a higher plane than Herodotus; and the reason is that Herodotus tells you "what actually happened," whereas Sophocles tells you "what might happen": poetry deals in universals, not particulars. This is probably the nearest thing, in the Greco-Roman world, to an association between literature and any kind of "structuring" capacity; but though some have seen significant cognitive implications here ("the capacity to enlarge understanding," Halliwell 1998, 136), the proposition surely falls far short of Anouilh's or Eco's, and Aristotle's explicit terms of reference help to indicate why. Poetry is "*more* philosophical" (*philosophōteron*); this is not to say that it *is* "philosophical." Its "seriousness," by definition, is less than that of philosophy itself. Detached thought is privileged over embodied art.

This kind of privileging is the norm, and not just a philosopher's self-interested view, throughout the Greco-Roman age. Take the poet Horace and

his *Ars Poetica*. The best poetry, Horace suggests, yields both "pleasure" and "instruction" (*Ars Poetica* 343). The basis and the source of good writing, he explains, is "wisdom" (*sapere*, 309); but the substance (*rem*) of this wisdom is to be found in "the Socratic writings" (*Socraticae … chartae*, 310). Poetic "wisdom," then, is not the poet's own contribution. It is borrowed from, and secondary to, a higher activity. However impressive some poetry may be, all poetry (including Horace's own) is secondary and subordinate.

Meanwhile, what of the "pleasure" that poetry yields? Yielding pleasure is a positive, no doubt, but all sorts of inconsequential activities yield pleasure. Again and again, from Aristotle onward, ancient commentators cite pleasure as a positive outcome of the experience of poetry – but never suggest that this pleasure carries any great significance: that, specifically, it implies what one contemporary aesthetician calls "the challenge of great works to our perceptual, cognitive and affective capacities" (Goldman 1995, 8).

One premise of the modern propositions is that artists offer a distinctive "vision" of life, perhaps a "critical" or subversive vision (cf. Arnold (*c*) and Althusser (k)), certainly a "creative" vision. It is symptomatic that this elevating vocabulary of "vision" and "creativity," like so much else, only becomes established in the Romantic age. Even by itself, it challenges the notion, established disparagingly by Plato and perpetuated more neutrally by Aristotle, that art is "imitation" – *mimēsis*. Tragedy, says Aristotle, is "*mimēsis* … of action and life" (*Poetics* 6). Aristotle's mimetic understanding does not diminish art (as Plato's had), but neither does it give art any special significance: art, however great, must always be secondary. This understanding remains the norm beyond antiquity and well into the eighteenth century. In his *Preface to Shakespeare* (1765), Samuel Johnson appeals to mimetic principle (and to "pleasure") to acclaim "this great poet": "Nothing can please long, and please many, but just representations of general nature … Shakespeare is above all writers … the poet of nature: the poet who holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life." Contemporary readers brought up on (say) digital photography and its "just representations" are likely to find Johnson's terms of reference limiting by comparison with his laudatory tone. But the limitation goes deeper. Compare and contrast Malraux (l): the artist is *not* a mere "transcriber of the world, but its rival." That modern understanding elevates art and literature out of the secondary altogether.

"*Just* representations": from Aristotle to Johnson, it is implicit in valuations of literature and art that (far from any "vision" that might contradict conventional certainties) all representation should conform to predetermined norms, ethical or spiritual. Even the most adventurous interpreters accept this premise. In a much-admired discussion of Homer, "Longinus" comments on the battle of the gods in *Iliad* 20–21 (*On the Sublime* 9.6–8):

> His imaginative descriptions … are extraordinary … earth torn from its foundations, hell itself laid bare, the whole universe sundered and overthrown … But terrifying as these passages are … they are utterly irreligious and violate decorum [*to prepon*] … In presenting the gods' wounds, quarrels … and all their contradictory passions, Homer has done his best to make the men of the *Iliad* gods and the gods men … The battle of the gods is far surpassed by his descriptions that represent the divine nature as it really is [*hōs alēthōs*]: unblemished, majestic, pure.

The admirable conceit, "the men gods and the gods men," is often cited in modern times as a compliment to Homer. "Longinus" means it as a put-down. The paradox is congenial to *our* age, when individuals are licensed to have views, even "world views," that subvert the conventional norm. In Greco-Roman antiquity, licenses, meaning adjudications on what "really" is, are awarded by philosophers, as they will be, in centuries to come, by Christian theologians: thought over art.

The allusion "Longinus" makes to "imaginative descriptions" (*phantasmata*) implies a limitation to the scope of *mimēsis*. In later antiquity, there is an awareness that *mimēsis* in the literal sense leaves it unclear how, for example, any representation of non-visible reality could come into being. In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (6.19), two speakers, one of them the neo-Pythagorean Apollonius himself, consider what it took for "artists like Phidias and Praxiteles" to make sculptures of the gods. Surely, says the interlocutor, it could only be *mimēsis* – but Apollonius contradicts him: "it was imagination [*phantasia*], a maker [*dēmiourgos*] wiser [*sophōtera*] than *mimēsis*. *Mimēsis* will only bring into being what it has seen; *phantasia*, what it has not seen …"

This "wiser" and the opposition with *mimēsis* give the impression of a fundamental reappraisal of the autonomous powers of the artist and potentially, therefore, of the significance of art. But any such impression is misleading. There is, indeed, a diagnosis, here, of "imagination" in roughly its modern sense, but despite the "wiser" (and the comparative recalls Aristotle's "*more* philosophical" in *Poetics* 9) there is "no connotation of spiritual insight" in these words (Pollitt 1974, 297). Interestingly, one of the few hints in the Greco-Roman age that art *might* lay claim to such a privileged status involves a comparison between visual and verbal art, to the disadvantage of the visual. "In sculpture, we look for a likeness to a human being; in literature, for something beyond the human" – this, from "Longinus" (*On the Sublime* 36.3). But the undoubted implication – that literature might transcend *mimēsis* altogether – is never pursued.

Early Greece

From the time of Hesiod and Homer to the close of the fifth century, literature, like other arts, is in practice highly esteemed; and for the bulk of this period it

is poetry, specifically, that enjoys this esteem. From the royal court to the elite symposium to the public festival, poetry's institutional status during these centuries has never been equaled, in antiquity or beyond. Throughout most of this period, poetry, performed in societally approved contexts, serves as the unchallenged medium for exploring personal feelings (Sappho) and public-political debate (Alcaeus), for celebration of national tradition, both legendary (Homer) and practical or theological (Hesiod), for – even – transmutation of sport to metaphysics (Pindar). Attic drama, tragedy most obviously, combines various of these functions; and it does so within an institutional framework exceptional even by Greek standards – a communal religious festival attended by the citizen body, that is at the same time a collective statement of polis achievement and pride, made manifest in parades of war orphans, displays of allied tribute, visits by foreign ambassadors.

Meanwhile, the claims of poetry to be taken thus seriously are, as we have indicated, acknowledged by poets themselves, from Hesiod and Homer to Pindar and Aristophanes (in tragedy, for reasons of fictional decorum, they are effectively absent). But it should be emphasized (though it seldom is) that, in terms of the active contribution poetry makes to the individual or the collective, these acknowledgments, real and important as they are, are generally unspecific, formulaic, and elusive. Hesiod's narrative of his encounter with the Muses is one of the more specific – but what does it tell us? The Muses are a divine source and transmit (therefore connote) authority, but when it comes to characterizing the value of the poetic outcome, all Hesiod actually says is that the Muses taught him the art of "beautiful" song (*kalēn … aoidēn*: *Theogony* 22), so that he can memorialize: he can "celebrate what will be and what was before" (32). Within a culture that venerates its gods and accepts the paramount importance of such "celebration," all this says everything that needs to be said. To a critical after-comer, it says very little.

Throughout the Archaic and earlier Classical periods, not much is added to Hesiod's claims. Instead, we get repeated allusion to the formulae: poets are "inspired" and poetry has a divine source and authority (the Muses); poetry memorializes "the deeds of men and gods" (*Odyssey* 1.338), and it is "beautiful." Poetry can evidently be (as Aristotle will say) "serious" (his word is *spoudaios*), but one will look in vain for worked-out accounts of why this "seriousness" (or that "beauty") matters. From around the start of the sixth century, authoritative seriousness is – again formulaically – alluded to by the word *sophos*: poets and poetry are both technically sophisticated and *wise* (*sophos* covers both: Silk 2000 , 46–48). The various formulae cluster and recur endlessly, even in the most sophisticated poetry. Pindar, *Pythian* 3, 112–115, is representative: "Nestor and Lycian Sarpedon … we know / From sounding verse that wise artificers [*tektones … sophoi*] / Construct. In famous song, achievement / Long endures …" Song *is* famous and also *makes* famous: yes, but …

In the comedies of Aristophanes, spokesman of an art "built up to towering dimensions" (*Peace* 749), the audacious claim is that the "towering" art of comedy can rival tragedy (Silk 2000). Comedy has much to say that is "amusing" (*geloia*) and much that is "serious" (*spoudaia*) too (*Frogs* 389–390). And – more substantively, indeed – comedy professes to give the city "good advice and teaching" (*Frogs* 686–687): this, in a play that conjures up the dead tragedian Aeschylus to "save our city" with *his* "good counsel" (1501–1502). This is indeed more substantive, and potentially significant for the cause of tragedy, as well as comedy – but then again, the plausibility of the Aeschylean mission is severely limited, in "serious" terms, not so much by the charming impossibility of the conjuring trick itself, as by Aristophanes' deflating satirical treatment of his Aeschylus, earlier in the play.

Wherever we look, in this vastly creative period, we find a lack of transferable substance in the claims made for poetry, and it is this very fact that makes poets an easy target for Plato, in particular: the poets claim "wisdom", but what are their claims worth? Can the poets defend them? And the inability of poets to substantiate their traditional claims is a significant element in Plato's critique, from the *Apology* onward: poets do say all sorts of "beautiful" things, they may be "inspired," but they have no real claim to "wisdom" (*sophia*) (*Apology* 22a–c). At the same time, though, the sustained commitment of Plato's critique, in the *Republic* above all, makes it unmistakably clear that poetry *is* a serious target: that its status is exceptional and its claims, hitherto, widely acknowledged.

While Plato and other philosophers challenge poetry (and thus the very heartland of literature) on the intellectual level, a different challenge is mounted in practical performance by oratory, a hybrid form that (in modern terms) has a "literary" aspect, but belongs essentially to the spheres of politics and law. If Plato undermines the claims of poetry to intellectual-spiritual authority (its *sophia* is to be superseded by his *philo-sophia*), the orators, in effect, appropriate its traditional role as public discourse, while their spokesmen, the rhetorical theorists, appropriate poetic paradigms for their own craft. The outcome is the new, reduced estimation characteristic of the Greco-Roman age. Poetry is seen as "entertainment" (as the orator Cicero sees it, in his *Pro Archia*) and intellectually secondary or subservient to the real "substance" of philosophy (as Aristotle and Horace see it).

Centuries later, with poetry still at the center of living literature, but after a long tradition of appropriation by oratory and domination by philosophy (now absorbed into Christian theology), the outcomes of these developments are still visible. When, momentously, the great Dante projects a great (and "serious") poem, his *Comedy*, in vernacular Italian, and seeks to defend this bold procedure, he does so in a treatise remarkably called "On Vernacular *Eloquence*" (*De vulgari eloquentia*: *c*.1303–1304). In the previous century, the theologian Thomas Aquinas had definitively identified poetry as "lowest

of all the disciplines" (*infima inter omnes doctrinas*: *Summa theologiae* 1.1.9). For Dante, then, poetry, however ambitious (and theological, too), is best reclaimed under the title of oratorical "eloquence." Sidney, we recall, characterized poetry as "of all human *learning* the most ancient." The formulation, we can now see, carries an – unintentional – irony.

Conclusions

The assignment of value to literature has never been greater than in early Greece – but the explicit terms of reference used to acknowledge that value are (let us say) indecisive. There is, indeed, a mismatch here between institutional acknowledgment and theoretical explication. Fully articulated and theoretically grounded esteem for literature, and art, has never been higher than in the modern age (irrespective of the esteemers' views of the level of achievement of their own age, and irrespective of the gap between esteem from the sophisticated and indifference from other segments of society). And notwithstanding considerable fluctuations in both artistic achievement and admiration for it, the two millennia that begin with Aristotle and end with Johnson exhibit another, distinctive mismatch: between the seeming quality, and qualities, of the highest literature produced and the modest terms of reference used to characterize that literature and literature in general. Symptomatically, even those, within this period, who sound ardent at one moment can seem offhand at another. The Elizabethan Puttenham who looks back to the "high esteem" that poetry once enjoyed, in antiquity, is also content to acknowledge the imaginative ("inventive") faculty of the poet in almost matter-of-fact terms: "all good poets, notable captains strategematic, all cunning artificers and engineers, all legislators, politicians, and counsellors of estate, in whose exercises the inventive part is most employed" (*The Art of English Poesy* 1.8). Yes, this is complimentary; but there is no sign – quite the contrary – that literature is in any way *special*.

In literature (and across the arts), individual works vary in perceived quality, and esteem for literature as a whole is broadly dependent on the achievement of the finest examples. And how are the "finest examples" identified? In all ages, writers and writings are valued in relation to a wide range of possible considerations. The topic – both as history and as theory – is large and complex; suffice it to say here that modern criticism draws on a far greater literary experience and has a far greater capacity to appreciate the range of issues arising. Indicative example: we moderns frequently foreground context in assessing value. For instance, across the arts, high achievement has often been associated with patronage – from King Ludwig of Bavaria and Richard Wagner to Augustus and the poets of Augustan Rome. Whether the patron is deferential (Ludwig) or not (Augustus), but particularly in the latter kind of case, these configurations may affect assessment. The place of Virgil and others in the inner circle of the Augustan regime is precisely what Petrarch

seems to have missed in his own age. Most of us, if we esteem Virgil highly, are more likely to bypass the specifics of that involvement, as T.S. Eliot did, in commending the "new insight into history, illustrated by the dedication of Aeneas to Rome," which helps to secure Virgil's place as "the classic of all Europe" ("What Is a Classic?" 1944) – or, rather differently, in admiring the "tenderness and pathos" in the *Aeneid* ("Virgil and the Christian World," 1951). That is: one may well value writers and writings differently in their immediate context (Virgil enlisted to validate the Augustan regime), in a broader and longer context ("the classic of all Europe"), in no context at all ("tenderness and pathos"). In antiquity, the perceived need for, and the implications of, such relationality of judgment are hardly felt.

There must always be a relation, but a complex and sometimes unpredictable relation, between the general grounds for esteeming an art form and the particular case to be made for (or against) a particular work. Likewise, universal principles cannot readily be extracted from particular, even cogent, critical observations. Commending the "tenderness and pathos" in the *Aeneid*, and in particular the "great tragic force" associated with "the love of Aeneas and Dido," Eliot, nevertheless, plausibly diagnosed an insufficiency by comparison with "the vision" of Dante in the *Comedy*: in Virgil, "Love is never given … the same significance as a principle of order in the human soul, in society and in the universe" – the significance that, in the *Aeneid*, "*pietas* is given" ("Virgil and the Christian World"). But it would be wholly implausible to infer some universal criterion from the comparison and apply it, critically, to all works of literature, as if to say, *this* work gives "Love" some significance as a principle of order, *that* one gives it a bit more, *this other* one not quite so much, and then arrange them in an order of merit, on this basis. In antiquity, many commentators commend "beauty" (as Hesiod does) or, in the Greco-Roman age, "decorum" (as "Longinus" does), and both criteria (if we choose to call them that) are widely appealed to – but a preference for beautiful work (a) over beautiful work (b), or for instantiation of decorum in case (c) over instantiation in case (d), needs more discussion – and such discussion may well entail interrogating or challenging the criteria themselves. It is not apparent, though, that any ancient commentator – on literature or art – ever recognizes this.

In the light of intensive and extensive theorizing about literature and art in the modern age, from Kant to the present day, it would seem to make sense to consider all such "criteria" as possible conclusions rather than actual starting points, or else as starting points modified in the course of individual response and critical debate. The complexity of the issues here, like the complexity of literature and art which is inseparable from them, is unquestionably better understood *now* than in the classical ages *then*. Admiration for the literary and artistic achievements of antiquity (or the centuries following) should not beguile us into supposing otherwise.

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FURTHER READING

The various matters considered in this chapter are rarely discussed together, especially in connection with the ancient world. Many of the individual topics are discussed in the course of Silk, Gildenhard, and Barrow (2014). The crucial significance of the eighteenth century is summarized, from a classical perspective, in Silk (2012). Contrasting discussions (philosophical, historical, literary-critical) that focus on value and literature/art as such: Budd (1995), Day (2008), Dickie (2001), Edmundson (1995), Goldman (1995), Hirsch (1976, 95–158), Leavis (1986), and Richards (1929).

Index of Subjects

aesthetic/aesthetics, definitions of

aesthetic value

aesthetics and ancient music

    and ancient rhetoric

agalma

ainos (fable)

aischrologia (obscenity)

aisthēsis (sense perception)

akribeia (precision)

Alexander the Great

    and festivals

Althusser, Louis

amoenitas see also locus amoenus

anger

Anouilh, Jean

anthologizing

apatē see also deception; illusion

apatheia

Apelles

Aphrodite

    of Cnidos (Figure 6.2) *see also* Praxiteles

    Crouching (Figure 3.4)

Apollonius of Rhodes and realism

appropriateness *see also decor/decorum*

Aquinas, Thomas

Archilochus

architecture

    beauty of

orders of
responses to
skill of
Tacitus on
Aristo of Chios, Stoic
Aristophanes
Aristophanes of Byzantium
on Menander
Aristotle
Arnold, Matthew
art, the arts *see also* craft, fine arts, *technē*
Archaic
and beauty
epochs of
forms, relative valuations of
identification
medieval and Renaissance
philosophy of
and pleasure
and religion
responses to
valuations
in early Greece
from Greco-Roman period to 18th century
in modern age
variability of
visual vs literary
art criticism
art history
art market (modern)
artists, as craftsmen *see also* craftsmanship, *dēmiourgos*

athletics, Greek
and warfare
Augustus
aulos (music for)
Ausonius
authenticity
authority (of poet)
authorship
autonomy, aesthetic
of poets

Bakhtin, Mikhail
Barberini Faun
Baroque, Hellenistic
Barthes, Roland
bath(s) *see also* water features
Batteux, Abbé
Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb
beauty *see also* *kállos*; *kalós*; *pulchritudo*
in architecture
of children
civic
of goddesses
and goodness
natural beauty *vs.* art
in official titles
physical
sexuality and
of soul
transcendent
Beazley, Sir John
Bernays, Jakob

biography, biographical approach
bird
Boccaccio, Umberto
bodies, in sculpture
    erotic
    gendered
    heroic
    ideal
    muscular
Boileau
bōmolochia (buffoonery)
books and reading
booksellers
Boxer, Terme, (Figure 3.3)
Boy with Goose
breath (*pneuma*)
brightness *see also lamprotēs*
bronze
building (as process)
buildings

Caecilius of Caleacte
Callimachus
Calypso's cave
canon *see kanōn*; Polyclitus
carmen (song)
catharsis/*katharsis*
Catullus
charis/kharis
chiaroscuro, *see also skiagraphia*
Chigi (*olpē*)
choros

chorus, choral performance
chrēstographia
Chrysippus
    statue of, (Figure 3.5)
cicada
Cicero,
    architectural tastes of
classicism
“classics,” canonisation of in Alexandria
Cleanthes
Cleomedes, author of *On the Heavens*
closure
collecting/collections
    of Greek art
Collingwood, R.G.
colonnades
color *see also* polychromy
    aesthetics of
colores austeri/floridi
column/columns
comedy
    and fiction
competition, *see also mousikoi agōnes*
completeness
complexity
concinnitas
    Alberti on
confidence
contrapposto
Cornutus
cosmology

cosmopolitanism, Hellenistic
craft (of poetry) *see also* *technē*
craftsman, status of *see also* *dēmiourgos*; Hephaestus
craftsmanship
Crates of Mallos
Crouching Aphrodite, (Figure 3.4)
cult statue

Daedalus
daidalon, *daidala*
dance
    aesthetics of (definition)
    in relation to Fine Arts
    in relation to other visual arts
Dante
deception, *see also* *apatē*; illusion
decor/decorum see also appropriateness
deinotēs (forcefulness)
    and "sublimity" *(hupsos)*
Demetrius of Phaleron
dēmiourgos
Democritus
Demosthenes
    compared with Isocrates
desire *see also* eros/eroticism
    and beauty
diastēma
diction (*lexis*)
dignitas
Dionysius of Halicarnassus
Dionysius Thrax
Dionysus

Artists of
dithyramb
dolos, *see also* *apatē*; deception
drama, Hellenistic
drapery
Drunken Old Woman, Munich Glyptothek, (Figure 3.2)
Duris of Samos

ekphrasis
ekplēxis
Eliot, T.S.
emmeleia
emotions
Stoic (*pathē*)
enargeia
enchantment *see also* *psychagōgia*; *thelgein*
Ennius
entasis see also optical refinements
epic
Epicurus, Epicureans
eros/eroticism *see also* desire; gaze
ethics of fiction
ēthos
euergete(s), euergetism
eupatheiai, Stoic
Euripides
eurythmia
euschēmosunē
Ezekiel, *Exagogē*

fear
festivals
fiction

fine arts
firmitas (stability)
“flight of the mind”
flowers,
imagery of
Forms, in Plato
François (vase)
Freud, Sigmund
furor poeticus

Gao Xinjian
gardens
gaze, erotic
genitals, in sculpture
genius
genre-crossing in Hellenistic poetry and art
genus grande (grand style) *see also* grandeur
genus tenue (slender style) *see also* *leptotēs*
Gigantomachy, Pergamon
god, Stoic
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von
gold
Gombrich, Ernst
Gorgias
Graces, Three
grammaticus (teacher of language and literature)
grandeur *see also* *genus grande*; *hupsos*; sublime
gymnasium

habrosunē
harmonia
harmony
harmozō

hēdonē see pleasure
Hegel
Hephaestus, as craftsman
Hermogenes of Tarsus
Herodas
Hesiod
Hipponax
history, and fiction
Homer
Horace
huperkalon, *to*
hupsos see also grandeur; sublime/sublimity
    "special effect, not a special style"
    synonyms of
hymns

iambos/iambus
illusion, *see also apatē*; *trompe l'oeil*
imagination *see also phantasia*, visualisation
    creative
imaging
imitation *see also mimēsis*
impersonation *see also mimēsis*
innovation, reactions to
inspiration
integration of reader/viewer
    in Callimachus' mimetic hymns
    in Cnidian Aphrodite
    in Munich Drunken Old Woman
    in statue of Chrysippus
intensity, intensification
intimacy

invocation
Isocrates, style of,
compared with Demosthenes
jazz
Johnson, Samuel
jokes
Joyce, James
judging
Juvenal
kállos
kalós see also beauty
kanōn (canon)
Kant, Immanuel
katharsis see catharsis
kharis see charis
King, Martin Luther
kithara (music for)
kordax
kore
kosmos
kata kosmon
kouros
Kristeller, Paul Oskar
labyrinth
lamprotēs see also brightness
landscape,
-painting/*topia*
laughter
Lawrence, D.H.
laws (as mimetic)

Leavis, F.R.
leptotēs (delicacy, slenderness) *see also* *genus tenue*
Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim
Libanius
Library of Alexandria
life like quality *see also* realism; verisimilitude
light
ligus (clear)
likelihood
likeness/*eikōn*
line-drawing
literary criticism
literature, identification of
    variability of
Livius Andronicus
locus amoenus see also *amoenitas*
logos (words, reason),
    the power of
Longinus
Longus
love *see also* desire; eros
    in amatory epigram
    in Apollonius of Rhodes
    in visual art
Lucian
Lucretius
Lycophron's *Alexandra*
Lyotard, François
lyric poetry, choral and monodic
Lysippus

Machon

Macrobius
magnitude
Malraux, André
Mantiklos, dedication by
marble
Martial
Marxism
Matisse, *Blue Nude*
meadows
medicine
Melissus
melody
Menander and the everyday
metafiction
metallurgy
metaphor
mētis
Metrodorus of Athens
mime theater
mimēsis
    as following examples
    meta-mimetic
    non-mimetic
    as playing a part
    pleasure-seeking
    as pretense
mimētikos
Mimnermus
mind's eye
'Modernists'
modernity (in antiquity)

Moschion, *Themistocles*
mousikē
mousikoi agōnes
movement
Muse(s)
museum
    at Alexandria
music
    instrumental
    for leisure
    for relaxation *(anapausis)*
    vocal
Myron
myth, Greek
    relationship to fiction

narratology
naturalism
nature *see also* *locus amoenus*, *phusiologia*
    and *mimēsis*
New Comedy
Nietzsche, Friedrich
Nike of Samothrace
nomoi (musical)
novel (modern)
nude/nudity
nymphs, nymphaea

object-image
Old Shepherdess (or Shepherd), Conservatori
onyx
opera
optical refinements

oratory
beauty as a topic in
and the emotions *see also* *psychagōgia*
and visual arts compared
orchēsis
orchestic imaginary
organism
ornament(s), adornment *see also* *kosmos*; *ornamentum*; *ornatus*
ornamentum
ornatus
otium (leisure)
Ovid

paean
painting *see also* vase-painting; wall-painting
ancient, Greek
legal ownership of
and mimēsis
Roman
palace
Panathenaea
pantomime
parody
Parrhasius
partheneion
Pasiteles
passion *see* emotion
passivity of reader/viewer
pathos see also emotion
patronage
patterns
Pausanias, on monuments and statues

Peisistratus
Peplos Kore
Pericles and sublimity
persuasion, as seduction *see also psychagōgia*
Petrarch
phantasia see also imagination; visualisation
pharmaka
Phidias
Philetas of Cos
Philodemus
Philostratus
Philoxenus of Cythera
phusiologia
picture gallery *(pinacotheca)*
pigments
pilgrimage, literary
Pindar
pity
Plato
    on *mimēsis*
    as novelist
    style of
plattein (mould, fashion, invent)
pleasure (*hēdonē)*
Pleiad at Alexandria
Pliny the Elder
Pliny the Younger
plot
Plotinus
Plutarch
pneuma see breath

poet, as craftsman, *see also dēmiourgos*
as herald
as law-giver
as prophet *see also vates*
poetry
Aristotle on
Epicureans on
as paradigm of eloquence
place in education
Plato on
Plutarch on
and prophecy
and prose
Stoics on
and visual art, Hellenistic
poiein
poiēsis
poiētēs
poikilia
in music
polychromy
Polyclitus
Canon
Doryphoros
Pompeian styles
Pope, Alexander
portico, porticoes
Posidippus
postmodernism
Pound, Ezra
Praxiteles

pre-emotions
Presocratics
‘Primitivists’
pro ommatōn
propatheiai, Stoic
proportion *see also* Polyclitus *Canon*
Proust
pseudos (falsehood, fiction)
psychagōgein
psychagōgia
Ptolemy II Philadelphus
pudica pose
pulchritudo
Puttenham, George
pyrrhichē

Quintilian

rage *see* anger
realism *see also* life-like quality; verisimilitude
recitation(s)

recusatio
relaxation *(anapausis)*
religion
    Greek
representation *see also mimēsis*
    techniques of
rhetor (teacher of rhetoric)
rhetoric, and aesthetics
    and architecture
    Aristotelian and Isocratean (sophistic) traditions of
    as a critical discipline

and the emotions
and poetry
as a training regimen
rhetorical theory
rhythm
Richards, I.A.
Romanitas
Rome, Augustan
rustication

Sappho
Sartre, Jean-Paul
satire
satyr play
satyrs
scholarship and attitude to the “classics”
Schopenhauer, Arthur
sculpture, *see also* statues
display of
and Greek gods
and Greek heroes
Hellenistic
seduction *see also* enchantment
semblances (*eidōla*)
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (Elder)
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (Younger)
senses
in experiencing architecture
and flowers
sensory cognition, aesthetics as
Shakespeare, William
shame

Shelley, Percy Bysshe
Shklovsky, Viktor
Sidney, Sir Philip
sikinnis
silence *(siopē)*
Sirens
skiagraphia
skolia
skopos
Socrates
Solon
song
sophists
sophos/*sophia*
soul, in Plato
sound
spectacle
spectatorship
    and aesthetics
    and cognition
    and visualization
Spinario
spoudaios
stage, staging
statues *see also* bodies; kore; kouros; sculpture
    coloration of
Stesichorus
Stoics
    on good, bad, and indifferent
    on poetry and art
    on tragedy

Studius
style *see also genus grande*, *genus tenue*
Aristotle on
in oratory and visual arts compared
quantitative and qualitative types
“types” of
“virtues” of
subjectivity
sublime
cosmic, cosmological
and divinity
Edmund Burke on
immaterial
material
pre–Longinian
sublimis, *sublimitas*
sublimity *see also deinotēs*, *hupsos*
Suicidal Gaul and his Wife (Figure 3.1)
summetria/symmetria see also symmetry
supplementation by reader/viewer
symmetry *see also summetria/symmetria*
symposium
synaesthesia

taste
technē see also craft
temple(s)
tenuitas (slenderness) *see also* genus *tenue/leptotēs*
Terpander
terpsis see also pleasure
textiles
texture

thauma see also wonder
thaumatopoiia
theater
thelgein/thelktēria see also enchantment; seduction
Theocritus
Theognis
Theophrastus
Thersites
thesmoi
Thucydides, on myth and history
timbre
Timotheus of Miletus
toreutics
touch
tragedy
    in Aristotle's *Poetics*
    in Plato's *Laws*
    by Seneca
Trojan scenes *(Iliaka)*
trompe-l'oeil
Tynnichus
tyrants, as patrons
tyrbasia

unity
utility

value
Vasari, Giorgio
vase-painting
vases
vates
Venus of Cnidus *see also* Aphrodite

venustas
verisimilitude *see also* life-like quality; realism
versatility
versicolor
Virgil
virtue
visual perception
visualization *see also* *phantasia*
vitality *see also* life-like quality; realism
Vitruvius
voice
votives *see also* *agalma*

Wagner, Richard
wall-painting
    Boscoreale, P. Fannius Synistor Villa
    Boscotrecase, Agrippa Postumus Villa
    Classical and Hellenistic
    Domus Aurea
    Domus on the Esquiline
    Farnesina Villa
    Herculaneum, Villa dei Papiri
    House of Livia
    House of M. Fabius Secundus
    Pompeii, House of the Cryptoporticus
    Roman
warfare, Greek
water features *see also* baths
weaving
wholeness
Winckelmann
wonder *see also* *thauma*

Xenocrates

Xenophanes

Zeno, founder of Stoicism

Zeuxis

Index of Ancient Texts Discussed

Achilles Tatius

Leuc. Clit., 5.1.6

Aelian

Hist. Misc., 2.44; 4.4; 14.47

Aelius Aristides

Or., 18.3; 23.14; 23.75–6 & 27.40–1

Aeschylus

Agam., 1072–3

Pers., 1043

Philoct., 745–66

Prom., 1080–90

Alcman

Parth., 1.53–5; 1.64–70; 1.66–9

Andocides (Pseudo-)

4.23

Antiphanes

Fr. 189 *PCG*

Apollodorus

Bibl., 3.128

Apollonius of Rhodes

Arg., 1.711–67; 1.763–7; 1.993–5; 1.1268–9; 2.1–97; 2.423–4

Apuleius

De Deo Socr., pr. 3

Archilochus

Fr. 2 and 4 W

Archytas

DK 47A24

Aristides Quintilianus

De Musica, 1.13.16–22; 1.24.2–3, 10–12; 2.11.35–42; 2.15.34–44

Aristophanes of Byzantium

T83 Kassel and Austin 1998, 25

Aristophanes

Acharn., 395–99

Birds, 748–51

Clouds, 524–6, 537–44, 549–50, 560–2

Frogs, 1–11; 686–7; 828 & 939–41; 1008–10; 1009–10; 1043–9; 1119–51; 1501–2

Thesm., 148–52

Wasps, 71–3

Aristotle

Eth. Eud., 3.2, 1230b 21–1a 12; 3.2, 1230b 25–1a 12

Eth. Nic., 4.14, 1127b 33–8b 9; 7.13, 1153a 14–5; 10.4, 1174b 31–3

Gen. An., 2.6, 743b 18–25

M.M., 1.1.19–20

Met., 1.2, 982b; 5.6, 1015b 16–7a 6; 5.16, 1021b 12–2a 3; 5.26, 1023b 26–4a 10; 8.6, 1045a 7–33; 12; 13.3, 1078a 31–b 6

Meteor., 3.4, 375a 22–8

Part. An., 5, 645a

Poet., 4–6, 20–22; 1, 1447a 11–2; 1, 1447a 13–28; 2, 1448a 1–6; 4, 1448b; 4, 1448b 5–12; 4, 1448b 9–19; 4, 1449b 24–28; 4, 1448b 24–9a 6; 6, 1449b 24–8; 6, 1450a 15; 6, 1450a 16–28; 6, 1450a 38; 6, 1450b 15–6; 6, 1450b 16–18; 6, 1450b 18–9; 6, 1450a 38–b 2; 7, 1450b 23–1a 14; 8, 1451a 16–35; 9; 9, 1451b 4–23; 9, 1451b 20–9; 9, 1452a1–3; 9, 1452a 12–13; 1452a; 11; 1452a 38–b 1; 1452b 30–3a 17; 1452b 33; 1452b 33–3a 10; 1453b 1–11; 1453b 1–14; 1453b 10–4; 1453b 11–12; 15; 1454b 8–11; 1455a 22–32;1455a 33; 171; 17, 1455b 15–23; 18, 1456a; 1456a 10–17; 1456b 2–5; 1456b 5–7; 1459a 17–b5; 1459b 17–31; 1459b 34–35; 1460a 11–7; 1460a–b; 1460b 8–11; 1460b 26–8; 1460b 32–1a; 1460b 6–21; 1461b 9; 1462a 18–11

Pol., 3.2, 1275b 26–30; 7.7, 1330b; 7.11, 1331a; 8; 8.5, 1339a 11–26; 8.5, 1339b 20–4; 8.5, 1340a 18–2a 18; 8.5, 1340a 36–8;

8.6, 1341b 2–8; 8.7; 8.7, 1342a 8–11; 8.7, 1342a 11–6; 8.7, 1342a 33–b 5; 8.7, 1342b 3

Rhet., 1.1–2; 1.3, 1358b 2–7; 1.3, 1358b 12–3; 1.5, 1361b. 3–12; 1.11, 1370a 27; 1.11, 1371a–b; 2.2, 1378a 30–b 4; 2.8, 1385b 14–5; 2.8, 1386a 29–36; 2.8, 1386a 33; 2.8, 1386b 1–4; 2.18, 1391b 15; 3.1–9; 3.1, 1403b 26–30; 3.2, 1404b 21–4; 3.2, 1405b 5–8; 3.7, 1408a16–9; 3.7, 1408a 23–4; 3.7, 1408b 10–20; 3.17, 1418b 27

Sens., 1, 437a9; 3, 439b 18–440b 25; 3, 439b 32–40a 6

Top., 6, 112b 22–3

Aristotle (Pseudo-)

Audib., 804a 21–28

Mund., 391a 1–5

Physiogn., AI, 807b 2 & b 17

Probl., 17.1, 915b 38–6a 11; 19.6; 19.15; 19.38

Aristoxenes of Tarentum

Fr. 50 Wehrli; 87

Asclepiades

Epigr.,18

Athenaeus

Deipn., 20e; 4.128c–130d; 5.196a–206c; 603f–604a; 631d; 630b–c

Bacchylides

3.17–21

Basil of Caesarea

In Hex., 2.7

Callimachus

Aetia 1.21–22; 1.24; 103

Epigr., 56.3

Hecale

Hymns 1.65; 4; 4.1–8

Callistratus

Imag., 8.3; 10.2

Choricius of Gaza

Description of a Painting which was in Gaza, Boissonade 161

Cicero

Att. 1.4.3, 1.9.2, 1.10.3 & 2.3.2

Brut., 69–70

Inv. 1.27

De Or., 1.28–9; 2.189; 2.189–96; 3.180; 3.195–8; 3.215

Fam., 7.23

Orator, 16

Pro Arch., 6.12; 8.18

Pro Mur., 76.4

Quint., 3.1.5

Tusc., 5.102

Cicero (Pseudo-)

Rhet. ad Heren., 4.8–10

CIL

8.8466 & 11. 4095

Cleanthes

Hymn to Zeus

Clement of Alexandria

Strom., 1.16.78

Cleomedes

On the Heavens, 2.1.169–70; 2.1.171–83; 2.1.343

Codex Theodosianus

15.1.16, 15.1.37 & 15.1.41; 16.10.15

Demetrius

On Style 1, 180–1; 14

Democritus

DK 68 B 18

Demosthenes

Contr., 28

Digest

1.18.7; 2.1.33–4

Dio Chrysostomus

Or., 32

Diodorus Siculus

Bibl. Hist., 2.4.5–6

Diogenes Laërtius

7.180

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

On Composition, 1, 11 & 25–6

On Demosthenes, 22

On Isocrates, 3; 3.38

On Lysias, 13.19

On the Style of Demosthenes, 5.5–17; 21–2; 32.4–7; 32.10–15; 48.23–6

Dioscorides

Epigr., 24

Dissoi Logoi

DK 90. 3.10

Eleg. Adesp

Fr. 27W;

Empedocles

DK 31B23

Ennius

An., 207 (Skutsch)

4.18

Etymologicum Magnum

Euripides

Andromache, 207–8

Helen, 23; 179–90; 260–3

Heracles, 676

Medea, 382–90; 1078–80

Phaethon, TrGF 779

The Cyclops

Fr. 909

Eustathius

Il., 606.16–7

Flavius Josephus

BJ, 7.5.158–60

Gorgias of Leontini

DK 82 A13

Helen (B11); 265; 354–5; 441–2; 480–83; 487

B23; 351 n. 16; 431

Hedylus

Epigr., 5.2

Heliodorus

Aeth., 2.30.6; 14

Hermias

In Platonis Phaedrum scholia, 231.2–12; 238.22–239.2

Hermogenes of Tarsus

On Types of Style, 1.12.20–28; 2.9–12

Herodas

Mimiamb., 4; 4.30–4; 4.59–78; 4.72–3

Herodotus

Hist., 2.148; 3.37; 6.21

Heron of Alexandria

Def., 135.13

Hesiod

Shield of Heracles

Theogony, 22–32; 23–34; 27; 27–8; 31–2; 80–103; 265–9; 570–89

Works and Days, 3–4; 7; 9; 10; 203; 650–9

Hippocrates

Regimen, 24

Hipponax

Fr. 36 & 39 W

Homer

Il., 1.1; 2.594–600; 5.770–2; 5.769; 12.77–80; 14.198–9; 14.214–23; 18.478–609; 18.590; 18.591–2; 18.590–606; 18.595–605; 20.170–1

Od., 3.264; 3.267–8; 3.371; 5.59–80; 6.160–5; 7.114–35; 8.73; 8.246 ff.; 8.260–265; 8.265; 8.370–376; 8.486–91; 8.489–491; 12.39–200; 13.107–109; 14.407; 14.455; 14.4.463, 14.463–7; 14.580; 17.383; 19.226–31

Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite

368–369; 89

Homeric Hymn to Apollo

145 ff.; 146–64; 146–66; 161–4; 164; 166–75

Homeric Hymn to Hermes

50–51; 424 ff.

Homeric Hymn to Pan

14–26

Horace

Ars Poet., 98–107 & 120–2; 309–10; 333–4; 451; 361–5

Ep., 2.1.109–110

Carm., 4.9

Sat., 1.4.32–63 & 70–77; 1.4.85–92; 2.1.1–4; 2.1.183–86

Inscr. Ephesos

621

IG

14.889

IGRR

4.446

ILS

5488, 5581 & 5640

Ion of Chios

Fr. 25.5–8 W

Inscr. Smyrna

637

Isocrates

Evagoras, 6–10; 9; 66

Panegyricus 28–30

John Chrysostomus

Ad Populum Antiochenum, *PG* 49. p. l. 33

Juvenal

Sat., 3.19

Libanius

Ep., 114; 724

Or., 11.109; 11.196–272; 18.187; 64.12–18; 64. 28; 64.57; 64.88; 64.97; 64.103; 64.104; 64.113; 64.114; 64.116; 64.117; 64.118

Progymnasmata, 12.23.11

Livy

45.28

Longinus (Pseudo-)

Subl., 1.3–4; 1.4; 5.1; 7.2; 7.4; 9; 9.2–3; 9.5; 9.6–8; 9.13; 10.1; 12.5; 15; 15.1; 15.3–4; 22.3–4; 30.1; 34–5; 35.3; 35.4–5; 36.3; 39.3; 44.6

Longus

Daph., pr. 1.1–2; pr. 1.4; 1.2.3; 4.5

Lucian

Dom., 2; 3; 6–10; 15; 17

Erotes, 14

Hippias, 6 & 7

Salt., 7–16; 19; 35; 71

Peregr., 19

Pro Imaginibus, 6 & 19

Zeuxis and Antiochus 2.5

Lucretius

DRN, 1.72–4; 1.933–50; 3.1–13; 3.152–8

Martial

Epigr., 6.42; 9.75

Moschus

Rape of Europa, 38

Nemesius

Nat. Hom., 78.7–79.2

Nicolaus of Myra

Progymnasmata, 12.17–13.13

Nonnus of Panopolis

Dion., 25.386

Ovid

Met., 3.344–5

P.Herc. 831

col. 8 N f. 75 Körte

Palatine Anthology

11.253; 16.96

Parmenides

DK 28 B 8.39–41

Pausanias

2.25.8; 7.16.7–8; 9.12.6; 10.4.1

Petronius

Satyricon 76 & 80; 83–90

Pherecydes of Syros

DK 7 B 2.14–16

Philodemus

On the Good King According to Homer

On Music, 4, col. 28.2–14 Neubecker (= 142.2–14 Delattre);

4.143

On Poems 5

Philostratus of Athens

Apol. Tyan., 6.19

Philostratus the Elder

Eikones, 1.1; 1.2; 1.28.4; 2.28.3

Philostratus the Younger

Eikones, 10.17; 12

Pindar

Isth., 4.18–19; 4.214–216; 6.1–9

Nem., 1.1; 3.12–143; 4.14; 5.1–2; 7.77–9; 8.12–17; 8.14–16; 8.19; 10.35–6

Ol., 1.16–9; 1.28–9; 2.70–4; 4.2; 6.1–4; 6.1–3; 6.9–11; 7.1–5; 7.1–10; 7.7–9

Pyth., 1.1–14; 3.112–15

Fr. 70b.1–8; 140b.7 S.-M.; 194 S.-M.

Plato

Apol., 22a–c

Gorg., 465b; 501d–e; 513b–c

Hip. Maj., 287e–288b

Ion, 533c–6a; 533d–5a; 534b 3–6; 534d 5–e 1; 535b–c 6; 535b–d; 535b–e; 540b 3–5

Leg., 625a; 644c–d; 644d; 654a; 655d 7–c 5; 658c; 658d6–8; 658e 6–9a 1; 668a; 668b 4–7; 669c 3–d 2; 669d–70a; 670c–d; 719c; 779b; 804b; 817b–d

Phaed., 109d–10d

Phdr., 229b–30b; 239c–d; 239c; 245a; 247c 6–7; 259b–c; 261a–78d; 263d–4c & 266d–72b; 268c–d; 270a; 276b–7a

Phlb., 26b 5–7; 32b–c; 33c; 47e; 48–49; 48a; 51a–3c; 51c–d; 51d 6–9; 51e; 61a–2a & 64c–5a

Prot., 326a 6–b 2; 339a

Resp., 2, 372d–3b; 2, 374e–6c; 2, 376c–401d; 2, 376e–77d; 2, 378e; 2, 382d; 3, 387a–b; 3, 393a; 3, 395d; 3, 395d–e; 3, 395e–6a; 3, 395e–6b; 3, 399b–c; 3, 399c 9–400a 2; 3, 399d 3–6; 3,

401a; 3, 411a 5–9; 3, 401b; 3, 401d; 3, 414b–5c; 4, 436a–41c; 6, 488a; 7, 514d; 7, 522a; 8, 557c–8c; 9, 568d; 10; 595a–602d; 595a–607a; 601d–e; 603a–b; 604c; 604d; 605c–d; 605d; 606a–d; 606c; 607a; 607d; 607d–e; 621d

Soph., 224a–b; 253c–6d; 266c; 268d

Symp., 196–98; 197e; 205b–c; 209a 3–8; 209a–e; 210e; 218e; 223d

Theaet., 146d; 155c–e

Tim., 39d; 45b–e; 47c 7–d 7; 67d; 68a; 87c–e

Pliny the Elder

Nat. Hist., pr. 17; 34.52; 34.58; 35.17–28; 35.24; 35.26; 35.50; 35.65; 35.99; 35.135; 35.116–7; 36.20; 36.24.102; 36.27; 36.33; 36.163; 36.59–61; 37.205

Pliny the Younger

Ep., 10.41.1; 10.23.2; 10.49.1

Plotinus

Enn., 1.6; 1.6.1; 4.3.30–31; 5.8

Plutarch

Aem. 6.8 ; 28

Alcib., 2.5.2–6.1

Ant., 80. 2

Arat., 13

Poet. aud., 16a; 18d; 33c–d; 34b–35a

Demetr., 34. 41

Lycurg., 12.6

Fam. Ath., 346a–347c; 346f

Per., 12.2

Poblic., 15.5

Quaest. Conviv., 5.1, 674a

Fr. 134 Sandbach

Plutarch (Pseudo-)

On Music, 1133b–c; 1135d; 1138a

On the Life and Poetry of Homer, 216–7

Pollux

Onomastikon, 4.66; 4.84

Polybius

Hist., 334.4.1–4

Porphyry

Antr. Nymph., 5–6

Posidippus of Pella

Epigr., 13.2; 62; 63; 67

Pratinas

PMG, 708.1–2 & 10–12

Priscian

Metaphrasis of Theophrastus, 23.13–24.20

Proclus

Com. Rep., 1.163.19–164.7

Theol. Plat., 3.11

Prodicus

DK 84 A19

Quintilian

Inst. orat., 3.7.27; 4.23.32; 6.2; 6.2.29; 8. pr. 18–20; 8.3.63–65; 10.1.46–131; 12.10

Rufinus

Palatine Anthology, 5.70

Schol. on Homer

Iliad, 14.342–51

Schol. to Theocritus

4.11–5.6

Seneca the Elder

Controv., 10.5.3–5; 10.5.27

Seneca the Younger

De Ira, 2.1–2; 2.2 & 2.4

Epist., 88.3; 108.9–12

Sextus Empiricus

Adv. Math., 1.252–3

Simplicius (Pseudo-)

Com. De An., 214.18–20

Solon

Fr. 1.2; 1–3; 13.2–4; 20.3; 24–26; 31.2–4; 36

Sophocles

OT, 865–8

Statius

Silv., 1.2.149; 1.5

Stobaeus

Floril., 2.88.8–90.6 & 2.88.22–89.3; 3.29.59

Strabo

Geogr., 1.1.10 & 1.2.3; 1.2.3; 1.2.4–40; 8.6.23; 10.3.9; 12.8.14, C 537; 14.1.40, C 647; 14.2.19

Suda

N 478

Suetonius

Dom., 14.4

Tacitus

Ann., 4.38

Dial. Or. 22

Hist., 2.21.3

TAM

5. 2. 980

Themistius

Or., 13

Theocritus

Idyl., 1.27–60; 1.41–2; 1.56; 1.61–141; 4.50–6; 15; 16.48–57; 17.112–6; 22.43; 23.32; 25

Theognis

125–8, 571–2 & 1013–16

Theophrastus

Char., 15.10 & 27.2–3

De Sensibus, 76–7

Fr. 78, 688, 691 & 707 Fortenbaugh

Thucydides

1.10.2; 1.95.3

Tyrtaeus

1.933–4

Virgil

Aen., 1.453–97

Vitruvius

Arch., 1. pr. 2–3; 1.1; 1.1.3; 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 2. pr.1–4; 3.1; 3.3.13; 6.8.9; 7. pr. 12; 7.5.1–4

Xenophanes

DK 21 B 1; B1.22; B 11

Xenophon

Mem., 1.2.24; 2.1.22; 2.15; 3.10; 3.10.10–12

Oecon., 4.20–24; 7.21 ff. & 33

Eq., 11.7–12

Poroi, 3. 12

Symp., 7; 9.7

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